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# Carita

## A Cuban Romance

Louis Pendleton

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# Carita

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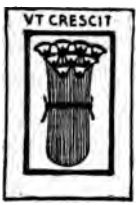
## *A Cuban Romance*

By

Louis Pendleton

Author of "The Sons of Ham," "The Wedding Garment," "In the Wire-Grass," "King Tom and the Runaways," etc., etc.

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# Carita

## I

### "La Reclusa Hermosa"

IT was morning at Buena Esperanza. The old Cuban sugar plantation, once in harmony with its cheerful name, was now the abiding-place of despair rather than of the 'good hope' of its first owners. The rich earth still nourished a riotous luxuriance of tropical vegetation, but giant weeds blossomed and ripened in lieu of grain. The vast cane fields were silent and deserted. Gone were the sad-visaged Chinese coolies, the merry, song-loving negroes, part free, part slave, who together had tilled the ground and reaped the harvest. The broad lands of Buena Esperanza were fast returning to a state of nature.

But an inextinguishable beauty remained as a part of this scene of desolation. The long avenue of royal palms leading from the plantation gates to the old residencia, the great, umbrella-like ceiba trees, the delicate foliage of the tamarinds, the yellow jasmine and the morning-glory clambering over tottering coral-rock fences and hedges of aloe and Spanish bayonet, the flamboyant whose gorgeous blossoms lay along the ground like sheeted flame, — all this was a continuing joy to the eye under that soft morning atmosphere and brilliant purple sky.

The only outward sign of life was a middle-aged man of the peasant class who lazily ploughed a small patch of cultivated ground within a hedge of bitter orange. The plough was similar to the crude instrument that has been used in Egypt for some three thousand years, being little more than the crooked branch of a tree, attached by a rope to the head of a sleepy ox, and succeeding in raking out a furrow

only an inch or so in depth. The ploughman was small, wrinkled, swarthy, with a manner scarcely more alert than that of his faithful beast. Occasionally, however, he looked up defiantly at the jeering crows as they sailed across the little field.

Nearing the bottom of the field, he stopped suddenly, startled, as the ringing of a small bell was heard in a grove of orange trees beyond the hedge just in front of him. In the midst of this grove, at a point where a cocoanut-palm towered above its surroundings, his searching eye discerned the indistinct outlines of a human figure, apparently clothed in red. At the same moment the bell was again rung, more loudly than before, whereupon the laborer hastily let go of the plough and hurried across the field, crossing himself as he went. Not until he reached the opposite hedge did he pause and look round.

"Don Ignacio walks out in open day," he had muttered, wonderingly. "Nuestra

Señora de Cobre protect us all!" he now exclaimed, piously invoking the patron saint of the island. "El amo is restless, and Pablo must be careful," he added.

Pablo *was* careful. He stood motionless by the hedge until the same bell rang again, this time in the shrubbery in the rear of the residencia. Even then several minutes passed before he ventured to return to his plough.

Within a stone's throw of the patch of cultivated ground, in a bower of shade trees, slumbered the residencia, a wide, low, massive building of yellowish porous stone. Its walls were three feet thick. It was built in two stories around a quadrangular patio, or court, and a broad veranda extended across its front.

Although Buena Esperanza as a whole was a desolate scene, the patio of the residencia indicated constant and intelligent care. The little coral tree that grew there, the fan-palms, the oleanders, the red and white roses, the love vine, the

galan de noche, drooped not for want of water nor looked in need of pruning. A stone-paved, cloister-like gallery, on a level with the ground, looked out upon two sides of the court, and another, more open and with an ornamented balustrade, ran all the way around on a level with the second story, adding to the Oriental atmosphere of the scene.

This inviting patio was now graced by the presence of a lady, young and fair, and clothed in pure white, who sat among the flowering shrubs on a rustic bench reading from a book of prayers. Her raven hair was typical of her country, but the clear white of her delicate shapely face indicated no commingling with other than the purest Castilian blood. Although her eyes — the crowning beauty of every face — were now in shadow, such was the charm of her expression, her unstudied pose, the lovely contours of her figure, that involuntary admiration would have been awakened in the most careless beholder.

Suddenly, at the faint sound of a bell, she looked up hurriedly toward a closed door which gave upon the upper gallery at the farther end of the court. Then, as if reassured, her eyes wandered absently over the patio and settled again upon her book, — eyes that were remarkable even in Cuba, where beautiful eyes are common. They were large, dark, lustrous, with a dash of languor in them, and a faint but settled expression of sadness. This expression seemed to deepen in them as they were again raised and fixed upon the delicate tendrils of the love vine, that curious aerial creeper, clinging to a shrub within reach of her hand.

"No, dear little vine," she muttered in the softest of voices, as if in answer to a spoken appeal, "you are not for me. The commonest peasant, the poorest negro or coolie, may love, but Carita Ramirez — never, never!"

As she uttered the last words a heavy sigh lifted the white frills of lace on her

bosom, and she glanced hurriedly back into her book, beginning to recite a prayer in whispers. She was interrupted by a lady who now appeared on the gallery above, a lady of somewhat advanced age, with deep wrinkles about the eyes, and a settled olive hue in the complexion which no amount of cascarilla could disguise. She was smoking, with evident relish, a cigar of a pronounced maduro tint.

"Carita mia, I think it is time for his coffee," she said, removing her cigar and speaking in subdued tones.

"Yes, Josefina," was the answer of the lady in the court, who rose promptly, shutting her book.

"And it will soon be time to start," continued the other. "Pablo will be ready with the volante as soon as we can dress. Pablo is ploughing this morning," she added.

Answering, "Muy bien, Josefina cara," Carita Ramirez crossed the court and entered one of the lower apartments of

the house. A few minutes later she appeared on the upper gallery, carrying a tray on which were cigars, coffee, a dish of sliced pine-apple, a peeled orange, and some thin slices of wheaten bread. Following the gallery around until she reached a point overlooking that extremity of the court most distant from the place where she had been sitting, the tray was set down on a stand at the door toward which she had recently glanced apprehensively on hearing the sound of a bell. After rapping twice, she turned, retraced her steps, and disappeared in one of the remote apartments of the house.

It was perhaps two minutes later when the door upon which she had knocked was slowly opened, accompanied by the ringing of a small bell, and a human figure seemingly clothed in red quickly reached forth a hand, took the tray in, and was gone, the door then being promptly closed.

Pablo soon finished his ploughing. It was Sunday, and the task which he had

appointed for the early hours of the day was light. He must now don his best clothes and attend the ladies with the volante. At nine o'clock, arrayed in a new straw hat and a linen shirt, the skirt of which hung outside his trousers, he appeared in front of the residencia with the curious national vehicle to which two horses were harnessed, one between the long fifteen-foot shafts, the other outside, to stout traces. Pablo himself rode the outside horse in the capacity of postilion.

The volante is a ponderous and clumsy-looking carriage, but the chaise-like body which swings low on leather braces between the enormous wheels is a very haven of comfort. No matter how many deep ruts and huge stones may be encountered on the terrible Cuban country roads, the body of the volante sways gently back and forth, is never upset, and gives one the impression of floating on a cloud.

In due time the ladies appeared and took their seats, having now exchanged their white house-dresses for deep black, even the soft lace mantillas draped over their heads and shoulders being of the same sombre hue. The clear white face of Carita Ramirez, innocent of rouge or powder, was scarcely less beautiful than when she sat among the flowers of the patio, but the elder lady, the Señora Duran, looked ghastly, her dark sallow face being thickly pasted over with cascarilla.

"I know I shall want to smoke before we return," the Señora remarked discontentedly, as they drove down the avenue of royal palms.

She spoke with the intonation and manner of an educated person, as did also the younger woman at her side.

"I fear you smoke too much, Josefina," was the gentle response. "It is bad for the nerves."

"*I* smoke too much, indeed! I who strictly limit myself to six cigars a day

and a few trifling cigarettes!" the Señora retorted indignantly.

"It seems much to me."

"Six cigars? It is nothing." The Señora clearly regarded herself as an object-lesson in stern self-denial. "Some people smoke three times as many. When you learn to smoke, Carita," she continued, "you will understand what a comfort it is to me in the life we lead. I can at least smoke, gracias à Dios!"

"I have no desire to learn," was the indifferent answer.

They passed out of the avenue and drove on over rough roads, between hedges of aloe and Spanish bayonet, past luxuriant fields and groves, the land sloping upward to low hills on their left, where stately palm trees, standing solitary or in groups, were gracefully outlined against the purple sky. The landscape glistened in the intense sunshine. There was not a cloud in any quarter; but half an hour later, on looking over his

shoulder, and seeing a gray striated haze against the sky, Pablo placidly remarked: "It rains at Buena Esperanza." The ladies were in no wise concerned. It might rain out of a seemingly clear sky half a mile to the east or the west of them at any moment.

A drive of two miles brought them to the small interior town of San José. The low massive buildings were all constructed of the same porous stone, colored by a wash, the predominating tint being a dingy yellow, although white, pink, and even pale blue were represented. The shops and bodegas were open as on other days of the week, and some of them, the latter especially, were crowded. The solemnity of the Puritan Sunday is unheard of in Cuba. The most prominent building near the centre of the town was the church, however, and here Pablo reined his horses and the ladies alighted.

Among numerous persons loitering about the entrance were two young ca-

balleros in Panama hats and spotless linen from top to toe, the native bronze of their faces being artificially lightened by an application of cascarilla. Their attention was at once centred upon the younger of the two ladies who had descended from the volante, and one of them, touching the shoulder of the smaller and handsomer of the two, who was conspicuous for a sash of a delicate lilac hue worn about his waist, exclaimed in subdued tones: —

"See, Sebastiano, it is she, la reclusa hermosa!"

The handsome little Sebastiano evidently did not need to be told that it was the fair recluse; his eyes hung upon her face, oblivious of all else, and he involuntarily moved a few steps toward her as if drawn by a magnet. Her forward glance met him and passed on instantly, leaving him in the act of doffing his hat and bowing with an air of the profoundest devotion.

"Ah, Carlos, mi amigo, she will not even look at me," he said bitterly, turning to his friend, his black eyes glowing with the fire of wounded pride if not wounded love.

"She is not human," whispered Carlos. "Any woman would have looked at you, were she maid, wife, or widow."

"Whether she be human or not, she is divinely fair," sighed Sebastiano.

"She is either a cold Diana, a religiosa, or there is another good reason why she cares not to look at you, this reclusa. You know it is said that Zorilla has been seen at Buena Esperanza. He can go, it appears, where no one else is admitted; she has chosen his lordship, the bandit."

On the other side of the portico two women of the lower class had also watched the arrival of the young girl and the Señora.

"They come from Buena Esperanza," said one, as both stared hard. "The Señorita looks gentle and good, and yet

the devil dwells with them there, they tell me, Elvira."

"Yes, I have heard. He walks in red, this devil. So says Enrique, the friend of Pablo."

Meanwhile, Carita Ramirez and her elderly guardian entered the church and hastened to their places, for their friend the cura, the good Padre Serrano, had begun the mass.

The church was small and the interior mean compared with the larger edifices of the same type in Havana. There was much crudity and color in the decorations, which, aside from the pictures, consisted largely of artificial flowers in the form of crosses and stars, and long strips of crimson cloth bordered with gold which hung here and there against the walls and pillars.

Only a small congregation assisted at the mass, and the two ladies from Buena Esperanza were evidently among the most devout. When it was over they waited,

after the majority of the people were gone, until the cura appeared and sought speech with them. There was little of the atmosphere of the ascetic about the round, good-humored face of Padre Serrano, although there was a certain gravity in the expression of his kind, black eyes.

"Buenas dias!" he said cheerily, as he drew near. He shifted a curious bundle wrapped in a handkerchief of yellow silk from his right to his left arm, so that he might shake hands. "This is my most spirited bird," he explained, referring to the bundle, and freely told them that he was shortly due at a neighboring cockpit, where the said bird was to fight for a stake of no inconsiderable amount. The incongruity between churchmen and cockpits did not seem to occur to either himself or his companions.

The Señora now remarked that few people had attended church that day.

"Yes, yes," sighed Padre Serrano; "the church is empty and the jail is full." He

seemed to forget that the cockpit would soon be full also.

"And Buena Esperanza," he continued, looking at Carita Ramirez, "how is it there?"

"It is well," she answered, her beautiful, sad eyes fixed earnestly upon him. "At least, it is no worse."

"I shall be with you soon," the Padre then promised. "Don Ignacio must be shriven." He looked around him cautiously before he pronounced this name.

The two gallants in spotless linen still lingered about the entrance of the church, but they were again disappointed when the two ladies appeared. The Señora for a moment regarded them critically, but her charge was to all appearances oblivious of their existence, and the volante carried away with it no less of tantalizing mystery than it had brought.

## II

### Arthur Glynn's Return

INTO Havana's beautiful harbor, under the battlements of La Punta on the right and the frowning Moro Castle on the left, steamed a proud vessel carrying the American flag.

Not to be soon forgotten is the picture presented to the approaching ship of Spain's "siempre fiel isla de Cuba," — the author of this expression was not satirical, howsoever it may sound in these days of insurrections! The frowning fortresses with floating colors of red and yellow, — once Spain's terrible banner of blood and gold, — the splendid harbor crowded with ships of every nation, the city with its multitude of churches and Moorish-like domes, its tinted stone mansions gleaming

in the intense light, the background of green hills, the stately palm trees here and there, — altogether form one of the rarest and most picturesque scenes in the two Americas. It belongs rather to the Mediterranean's shores than within a hundred miles of Florida, the southern shores at that, although Cuba, in scene if not in art, is the Italy of the New World.

Foreign vessels as a rule are not allowed to touch the wharves, and the American steamer cast anchor in the middle of the harbor, there awaiting the arrival of the health officers. Permission being given them to land, the passengers gazed curiously and somewhat anxiously down at the dozen or so of small boats crowding alongside, each representing some Havana hotel and each with a crier whose lungs appeared to be less robust than those of the determined American hackman. "Inglaterra! — Telegrafo! — Roma! — Pasaje! — San Carlos! — Cubano!" were the more insistent cries.

Among the passengers standing on the deck was a young man of twenty-three or four, whose appearance was in striking contrast with that of the average dark, undersized Cuban. He stood full six feet in his stockings, was fair of face, and had light hair, blue eyes, and a young but vigorous, hay-colored mustache. To this seeming representative of a colder clime the picturesque harbor and city were indeed novel, yet in every point familiar. An American by birth and heritage, Arthur Glynn had, nevertheless, grown up in Cuba and was now returning to his home after an absence of more than four years spent largely at the Johns Hopkins University at Baltimore.

Ordering his baggage to be brought after him, he was about to descend to one of the boats, when a voice from below arrested him.

"Holà! Don Arturo Gleen! Hold, — descend not, Don Artoor, until my boat approach."

Arthur Glynn stepped back, having recognized a friend in a private boat which was awaiting its turn to come within reach of the hanging stairway. The friend was one Don Alfredo Rodriguez, a Cuban gentleman who resided on a sugar plantation in the neighborhood of the interior town of San José, at no great distance from the young Americo-Cuban's own boyhood's home.

"Buenas tardes, Señor Rodriguez!" cried the young man, well pleased.

"Gude evaning! How eez you' health?" responded the Cuban, preferring to speak English, his uncertain knowledge of which was a source of enormous pride to him.

Although a Cuban of pure blood, Don Alfredo was almost as brown as an Indian. His sparkling black eyes and bold profile were attractive, and he bore himself with a pleasing air of grace and dignity. He was doubtless past thirty, his undersized frame having become a little stoutish and an occasional gray hair being visible in his

vigorous black locks. His boat, like all the others, was in part covered by an arched lattice-work of wood (over which an awning is thrown in bad weather), suggesting a chicken-coop or the canvas-covered wagon of the American frontier with the canvas left off.

"How did you know I was on the *Florida?*" asked Arthur Glynn, stepping into the boat and shaking the planter's hand.

"The news arrive to me as I go to Havana yesterday."

"And how are they all at the dear old Destierros?"

"Muy bien. The Seoñra Gleen eez well, also Mees Ray, also the little boy Felipe. They wait in haste to see you. But no train go to San José before to-morrow, I regret."

"I 'wait in haste' to see them, too," rejoined Arthur Glynn, with a twitching about the corners of his mouth; "but as there's no help for it, a night in Havana will not be hard to bear."

Landing, they took a victoria and drove to the hotel Pasaje in the Prado, where Don Alfredo was staying. Arthur Glynn had been absent from Cuba long enough to take an interest in looking about him. How different it all was from America, — almost like another world and certainly like another century. The narrow streets, the variously tinted stone houses, the huge barred windows without glass or curtains, the dark Cubans, the women in their graceful mantillas, the miserable Chinese beggars, the ubiquitous lottery-ticket vendor, the slatternly negresses with cheap cigars in their mouths, countrymen leading mules laden with stalks of young green corn and other produce for sale, — there was no end of strange sights and sounds!

Having seen his young friend comfortably installed at the Pasaje, toward sunset Don Alfredo invited him out for a drive in the Paseo de Carlos III, *the* fashionable paseo of Havana, in order that they might

view the gay procession of carriages filled with matronly señoras and beauteous black-eyed señoritas, all in evening dress, waving jewelled fans, and casting coquettish glances at the bowing caballeros. At dark the two friends returned to the hotel for dinner. The dining-hall was graced by the presence of many ladies, but smoking was continuous, not only while lingering over the wine or coffee, but between the courses of the meal itself.

Later, after a stroll in the Plaza de Isabella, where all classes of the Havanese appear of a balmy evening and sit and chat and promenade while listening to the music of a band, the two friends went the round of the prominent play-houses, a proceeding more reasonable than may be supposed, in view of the fact that the majority of the performances were of the variety type, and that tickets were sold for each act separately. At the great Tacon opera house they heard a portion of the never-dying *Trovatore*, at the Peyret they

witnessed a one-act comedy, at the Albisu and Irijoa a ballet and some extraordinary feats of legerdemain.

"And now the Alhambra," said Don Alfredo at half-past eleven. He added that, for his part, he did not approve of the Alhambra, but all the men went there. So now did these two, and saw a dance that could hardly be matched in the wildest Parisian *café-chantant*.

Arthur Glynn came away regretful, his thoughts gladly returning to the opposite of what he had seen. He felt thankful that the pure and the sacred triumphantly existed in spite of the other.

At midnight the shops as well as the cafés were still open and brilliantly lighted. Seated in one of the latter opposite the Plaza de Isabella, the two friends watched the gay men and women who were congregated there drinking coffee or light wines, and smoking, smoking, smoking! Under the influence of his glass the friendly Don lost that watch and ward

over himself which would otherwise have guarded a secret.

"Your cousin, Mees Ray," he said, with a kindling eye and an affectionate glance at his companion, "— you have not yet see her, I think; she eez — ah, yes — *beautiful!*"

"I am glad of that," said Arthur, smiling. "Is *that* the lay of the land?" he mentally commented. "Then this dear old Don is to be my rival, for my mother's heart is set on having my cousin Mabel marry *me*."

"What of our neighbors at Buena Esperanza?" he went on to ask, preferring to change the subject.

Did he not know they had failed and gone away long since? Buena Esperanza was now a scene of desolation. There were some people living in the residencia, however, — strange people.

"Who are they?"

Don Alfredo lifted his broad shoulders in a shrug. That was a mystery. There

now lived there an elderly woman who was said to call herself the Señora Duran, a man-servant, one Pablo, who answered all questions with a solemn shake of the head, and a beautiful young girl or woman known as Carita Ramirez; but whether she were maid, wife, or widow, no one had definitely ascertained. The two ladies went nowhere and made no friends, appearing in public at rare intervals, and then only at church. Such persons as had ventured to call were not encouraged to repeat the experiment. Those of the fair sex were received by the Señora, who volunteered no information and expressed no desire to see them again; the men were met by Pablo, who offered them aguardiente, but failed to satisfy their curiosity. At present no person whatsoever ventured upon the estate except the cura, the ladies' confessor; but Padre Serrano, though he kept fighting cocks and was not strait-laced, would not talk.

The mystery was complicated by the

presence of an unknown man, who lived at the silent residencia and never appeared at all. Only once had he been seen, and then from a distance by a friend of Pablo's, who reported that he was dressed in red. The peasantry had long since declared that the devil resided at Buena Esperanza, and they gave the place a wide berth.

"And what do you suppose is the meaning of all this?" asked Arthur Glynn.

Don Alfredo shrugged again, remarking that he troubled himself with no suppositions. He disliked to inquire into the privacy of others. All that in any way concerned him, all that he could vouch for, was the beauty of the younger lady. He had seen her once at church, and the common report that she was unusually handsome had been fully verified.

"Well, but," insisted Arthur, "when people behave in that way, they must expect their neighbors to talk. I am inclined to suspect, from what you have said, that the unknown is an escaped

criminal in hiding in the bosom of his family."

Don Alfredo thought he might be that, or he might be a fiction altogether, made use of to cover up another matter — the matter of Zorilla's visits. One suggestion that had been made was that the beautiful recluse was the wife — or the friend, perhaps — of Zorilla. There was a farm-laborer who swore he had seen Zorilla at Buena Esperanza late one night.

"And who is Zorilla?"

"What! have they not heard of Antonio Zorilla in America?" exclaimed Don Alfredo, his interest in the topic so great that he had forgotten his labored English, and fallen into correct Spanish. "He was one of the most daring of the sub-leaders under Carlos Manuel de Cespedes in the last rebellion, which, as you know, began in 1868, and ended, or was supposed to have ended, in 1876."

"Oh, yes. I was a youngster at the time. I remember now to have heard of

him," said Arthur, "but that is long ago. Eight years of war have now been succeeded by nine years of peace."

"Peace!" ejaculated Don Alfredo, lowering his voice and looking about him cautiously. Satisfied that he was not overheard, he went on to say that there had been no real peace in Cuba for sixty years. There was an attempted revolution in 1823, another in 1826, another in 1828, and from 1848 to 1850 Narciso Lopez, who was afterward executed, kept alive a serious rebellion. From 1868 to 1876 Cuba was in a chronic state of civil war, the patriot forces being led by Cespedes, who was seconded by Zorilla and other bold spirits. A measure of quiet was restored in '76, after Spain had spent millions, sacrificed the lives of more than a hundred and fifty thousand men, and after promises of liberal concessions, which, as usual, were never fulfilled. But this was only a forced acquiescence, not a real peace.

Don Alfredo went on to say that,

moreover, there had been roving bands of insurgents in existence since 1876, causing the authorities serious annoyance and leading them at times to make vigorous attempts toward their entire suppression. The mountains and more or less inaccessible forests of the eastern district still served to secrete many armed and disaffected people, the news of whose frequent outbreaks the press of the "ever-faithful isle" was forbidden to publish. There were strongholds that had not been captured and had been for years the resort of runaway slaves and escaped criminals as well as the few regular insurgents who still refused to yield. These together, at the present time, formed a roving community of several hundred desperate men who, divided into small bands, made predatory raids upon travellers and rich and loyal planters in order to keep themselves supplied with necessaries other than those so generously afforded by prolific nature. There were,

indeed, some bands of brigands pure and simple who made war for plunder, even resorting to the holding of prisoners for ransom. It had long been necessary, therefore, to carry arms for self-defence on the country roads in various districts, and even the peasant class wore swords when carrying their produce to market.

Up to the present time these lawless bands had usually been strong enough to repel the detachments of regulars sent to overwhelm them, but the fighting was of the most bloodthirsty and implacable character, no quarter being asked or given by either side. This continued resistance served to keep alive the hopes of the insurgent element, desperate as was the cause which only outlaws, escaped criminals, and slaves still dared openly to support. In spite of strict surveillance, arms and ammunition were frequently smuggled to these men by sympathizing Cubans resident in Florida.

"Zorilla and his band," continued Don

Alfredo, "are now said to be located in the mountains not thirty miles from your home, the Destierros, the authorities having failed utterly in their efforts to suppress him. The loyal call him a bandit, the insurgent element a patriot at bay. The sympathy of so many is his surest safeguard, no doubt. When he does not feel strong enough to meet the force sent against him, he shifts his position from one retreat to another, travelling by night and lying in the chaparral by day. He has resorts in many different quarters, and has been seen even in the Isle of Pines. This, at least, is the common talk, which I merely repeat to you."

"And this is the man who dares to visit the 'fair recluse' by night?"

"So says report; but who can tell? Come," said Don Alfredo, rising, "let us to bed."

And so they left the still bustling café, and walked arm in arm toward their hotel at one o'clock in the morning.

## III

### Buena Esperanza in the Hurricane

WHEN Arthur Glynn stepped from the train at San José about the middle of the following afternoon, he found a volante awaiting him in charge of a negro whose face was associated with his earliest recollections. Willis — Señor Willis Glynn he called himself among the negroes, coolies, and white laborers connected with the Destierros plantation — was an old attaché and faithful friend of the family, having emigrated with them from the States to Cuba as a boy of sixteen immediately after the Civil War, now twenty years gone. Neither the lapse of time, nor his marriage with a native black woman, nor his fatherly relations toward a numerous Spanish-speaking progeny had

succeeded in alienating Willis from his loyalty to American customs and the English language as he chose to speak it. Nor had all these influences been powerful enough to weaken his early and fine contempt for "dese yuh Spanish white folks" or "dese yuh Spanish niggers." He remained to the last "an American."

Willis was one of the blackest of negroes, with typical features, characteristic good humor, and was distinguished by an intelligence quite remarkable when this was contrasted with the stupidity of the average native black, or of the miserable imported coolies, or even of the peasant class of Cubans. And he was fully conscious of his superiority.

"Well, who ever seen de like!" he exclaimed, as Arthur Glynn appeared. "Why, Mas' Arthur, what a fine young gen'leman you is got to be! Yo' ma gwine to be proud to look at you. She sho' is. You gwine to show dese low-life Cubans what a rale gen'leman is, I tell

you! Dass de sort o' gen'leman we turn out dere at home in Maryland, dat is."

"I'm afraid these 'low-life Cubans' have taught you the art of flattery, anyhow, Willis," said the young man, smiling and taking his seat in the volante.

This accusation only served to convulse the negro with delighted laughter. "I tellin' you de honest trufe, Mas' Arthur, I is!" he ejaculated. Willis had learned to use the abbreviated form of "master" in his early youth, and after emigrating to a country where slavery still existed, although he clearly understood that he himself was a free man, he had seen no reason for revising his original method of addressing his superiors.

"Well, and how are they all at the Destierros?" asked Arthur, as soon as they were clear of the noisy station and the volante was rolling through the quiet town, Willis being mounted on one of the horses according to custom and frequently

casting admiring glances over his shoulder at the occupant of the vehicle.

"I reckon yo' ma putty well," was the answer, "but she got a sight o' things to worry her and I kin see she frets powerful. We's had a heap o' trouble at de Destierros sense de boss died. Managin' all dem niggers and coolies and getherin' and shippin' de sugar crap ain't no fun. We's needed you bad and it's a mighty good thing you's come."

"Yes, I suppose so," rejoined Arthur Glynn, with an absent look and a heavy sigh. The mention of the master of the Destierros ("el amo" he was styled by the native laborers) reminded the home-returning son that he was to see his dear father no more.

"Miss Mabel she well," continued Willis; "she ain't got de 'sponsibility and don' worry like yo' ma do. Look like to me she have a good time wisitin' and all dat. She go to de Limoneros constant. Dat Doña Isabel come a-runnin' over for

'er in dey volante all de time. 'Tain't none o' my business, but look like Don Alfredo is sparkin' Miss Mabel and yo' ma don' like it. But dat don' bodder me. I know none o' our family ain't gwine lower deyself to marry none o' dese yuh Cubans. For all dey grand ways, dese Dons can't hold a candle to de 'Merican gen'leman."

Remarks from a servant that would ordinarily have been taken as a gross impertinence, were in this case received in the friendly spirit which animated them. The black man's devotion to these strangers in a strange land had been so constant and so useful during many years that he had become, and had been freely accorded the position of, a privileged character.

"You set a standard for us," laughed Arthur, "that you failed to stick to yourself. You married a native woman."

"Shoo!" cried Willis, with a loud guffaw and the African's overdone shrug.

"Dass diffunt. I ain't white folks, and den you-all kin go to Maryland to find somebody to marry, and I can't."

They were now in the open country, the road bordered here by crumbling stone walls, there by hedges of aloe, bitter orange, and Spanish bayonet. In a corn field on their right a swarthy native was sleepily ploughing with an ox after the prevailing method. Willis pointed to him in great scorn.

"Now des look at dat fool mulatto nigger ploughin' wid dat stick!" he exclaimed. "Ain't got gumption enough to git a sho-nuf plough. Dey's all alike. Dey's seen how we-all plough dere at de Destierros ever sense we come yuh, but dey can't larn nothin'."

"He's not a mulatto; he's a white man."

"I reckon he *ses-so*," Willis rejoined, with another shrug. It was possible to comprehend, and he was willing enough to admit, that Don Alfredo Rodriguez and

his class were white men, but to Willis the dirty, swarthy farm laborers were from the beginning and would never be more than "mulatto niggers" pure and simple.

"You have said nothing about Phil," suggested Arthur.

"You won't know him, he's growd so. Tell you what, Phil's gittin' to be a mighty big little man dese days. Smart ain't no name for it; he's sharp as a razor. He wanted to come to meet you, but yo' ma wouldn't 'low it. She was 'fraid de storm might ketch us, and I reckon it will git yuh fo' night."

Arthur glanced at the clear, purple skies on either hand. "It doesn't look threatening," he said.

"Ain't you tuck notice how still it is?"

It was even so. Arthur promptly noted that not a leaf stirred, not even in the upper branches of the tallest palms, whose feathery crests were usually dancing in the sway of the lightest breeze. The intense stillness gradually became

almost painful. The atmosphere grew strangely transparent, objects at a great distance seeming to be more clearly outlined than ever before. All nature appeared to be restless and expectant. The cry of the wild guinea-fowl was heard no more, the little yellow tomiguin ceased its merry chirp, and the noisy paroquet scudded in silence from tree to tree. The buzzard had ceased its high sailing, and anxiously sought a safe perch. The horses whinnied and sniffed the air. It was not long before field-workers were seen hurrying homeward with howling dogs at their heels.

"It is coming," said Arthur anxiously, and Willis whipped up his already hurrying horses, careless of the deep ruts and huge stones in the road.

"Sho' gwine to cotch us fo' we git home," remarked the negro a few moments later. Great clouds were now rapidly covering the heavens.

"There's no help for it; we'll have to

stop on the way. Turn in at that place ahead of us."

"Look yuh, don' less stop dere if we kin help it. Dey tell me de devil stays dere. Dat's Buena Esperanza."

"Why, so it is. Well — better face the devil than the cyclone."

"Don' know 'bout dat," said the negro dubiously.

He seemed really disposed to argue the matter, but at this juncture his keen eye took note that certain tall palms far away on the hills to the right had bent forward as if before the first breath of the storm. A moment later they reached the foot of the Buena Esperanza avenue, and he guided his horses into it. Up between the long rows of palms the volante whirled recklessly, and presently stopped short. Arthur leaped out, sprang upon the veranda, and knocked loudly on the door of the silent residencia.

During half a minute that seemed a quarter of an hour there was no answer.

Meanwhile a hoarse roaring, ever increasing in volume, was heard from the forests on the hills. Willis had alighted and begun to unhitch his horses, when the door at last partly opened and the face of the Señora Duran was seen, inhospitable and troubled in its aspect.

"What would you?" she asked in mellifluous Spanish.

"The temporal is upon us, and we seek shelter."

She seemed to waver for a moment, and then answered: "But strangers never come here. You may be imprisoned for twenty-four hours, and that would be an awkward matter. Have you not time to reach the Limoneros? It is not far."

"I hope so, for I shall not stay here to trouble you," said Arthur Glynn, turning away with an expression of disgust.

He ran down the steps and leaped into the volante, ordering the negro to mount and drive away. But he had no sooner done so than there came a great howling

rush of air that bent the palm trees low, well-nigh overturned the volante, threw the door wide, and went roaring and shrieking into the chambers of the residencia. In the momentary lull after the first blast a woman's voice was heard from some quarter within, as if urging the Señora to act. The tone clearly indicated a mingling of entreaty and command, although no words were distinguishable. Immediately the Señora stepped forth.

"Stop!" she cried. "You cannot go on. It is too late. Forgive my seeming barbarity. You cannot understand, nor can I explain. But you must stay."

Another blast followed, stronger and more threatening. It was madness to go on. They must stay, however trying the situation might prove. Pablo now appeared and directed the negro to drive into shelter toward the rear of the house. Arthur meanwhile followed the Señora within and was shown into the reception-

room, a long and lofty apartment which seemed larger than it really was in the dim light, the window shutters being carefully closed and no lamp as yet lighted. Indistinct frescoes were discerned on the walls and ceiling and the floor was tiled in white marble, all indicating that the first owner had attempted the construction of a palatial country residence at Buena Esperanza. But almost the only furniture the apartment now contained was a long strip of carpet down the centre, bordered on either side by a row of cane-bottomed rocking-chairs. Inviting the visitor to be seated, the Señora Duran retired, promising to send him refreshments shortly.

"But can I not give assistance?" Arthur ventured to suggest. "It may be necessary to barricade the windows."

"Pablo will attend to that," was the prompt answer, with a look that most unequivocally admonished him to remain quietly where he was.

He learned later that not Pablo alone,

but he with the anxious and hurried assistance of both ladies, accomplished this labor. Long before the task was completed Pablo and Willis appeared in the salon, both loaded with stout timbers, which they placed on the floor. The former then suggested that the visitor and his servant keep watch in the four front rooms, the two on the first floor and two others immediately above to which they could ascend by a staircase in the hall. Meanwhile he would see to the rest of the house, assisted by the watchfulness of the ladies.

Pablo asserted with great earnestness that the visitors would have all they could do to attend to the six windows allotted to them, and as they valued their own safety and that of the house, he begged them not to desert their posts or venture beyond the assigned limits. The arrangement was not objected to; and having shown Arthur how to place the timbers against the panels of the shutters, that closed from within,

and conducted Willis to the upper rooms and set him to work there, Pablo hastily retired to take similar precautions elsewhere.

Having braced a solid timber against each of the groaning windows of the lower front rooms, Arthur paced back and forth, listening and reflecting, his thoughts uneasily turning to the family at the Destierros. How would they fare? Would his mother secure the necessary protection for the house without the aid of Willis? He recalled but one temporal of the character of the one now evidently at hand, and the recollection of the scenes then witnessed made him tremble.

The hurricane was now rushing across the face of the country with a steady roar like the falling of an ocean of water over a precipice, its furious blasts breaking with a noise of battering-rams against the walls of the trembling residencia, and swooping down under the eaves and into the balconies of the court with a

booming as of an angry sea and a howling as of a legion of devils. Hastening from one window to another, the anxious watchers waited in mortal dread that the roof would be carried from over their heads and the very walls be thrown down upon them. The wind whirled round and round and beset every door and window like a host of living creatures battling for admission, now on this side, now on that, now at every quarter simultaneously, as if maddened by resistance and consciously determined upon death and destruction. And the besieged well knew that if once it should gain a foothold by window or door, its end would be achieved.

During a slight lull in the attack on the front Arthur found himself watching through a broken panel the havoc without, careless of the rain that fell on him in a flood. The storm swept forward with terrific force and speed under a dark, turbulent sky, the very wind as it were a tangible element of a leaden color. All manner

of débris flew before it. Bits of roofing from neighboring out-houses, tiles, broken branches, and even uprooted trees were whirled across the view as helpless as autumn leaves in the grasp of the hurricane.

It was an hour or more after night had fallen when Pablo hurried into the salon, bringing a candle and a tray on which were cold meat and bread, fruit, brandy, a pitcher of water, matches, and the universal *sine qua non* — cigars. Depositing the same on a stand in a corner and inviting Arthur to refresh himself, he paused only to give uncertain answers to questions relative to the probable length of the storm and the state of the defences in other parts of the house, and he was gone, as he came, in great haste.

During the succeeding hour Arthur contrived to take some refreshment, though frequently obliged to drop the food and run fearfully to some threatened window. Toward midnight he took the candle and ascended to the upper floor, where

he found Willis watchfully on guard. The negro was directed to descend and take charge of the lower rooms, in order that he might eat and drink in the interval of his labors.

All night long the wind bellowed and roared about the house with no perceptible decrease of violence; but as the daylight began to stream through the cracks in the windows, Arthur noted gladly that there seemed a slight but gradual and continuing abatement of its force.

It was shortly after he had been made hopeful by these observations that a sudden fierce blast was followed by an alarming rattle and bang and roar in a neighboring apartment of the upper story. Forgetting Pablo's earnest and repeated admonition to leave all but the front of the house to him, Arthur ran to a door leading toward the rear apartments, opened it, and stood on the threshold of a room that was evidently used as a mere passageway, being almost entirely devoid of furniture.

He saw at once that the wind had broken in, and was howling madly through the apartment, causing the walls to tremble. He saw also that three other persons beside himself had rushed to the rescue, entering by different doors, and that each of the others for some reason had halted momentarily in a kind of panic or state of stupefaction. The nearest of these persons was Pablo, the next beyond him was a lady, young and handsome, whom Arthur doubted not was the far-famed "fair recluse"; the third, at the farther end of the room, was an unknown man, wrapped in a long red shawl, his head covered by a woollen night-cap or hood drooping forward over his face, which looked deadly pale.

The last was the first to move. Without a word he shrank back through the door by which he had entered, closing it after him. Then Pablo, crossing himself and muttering prayers, bounded toward the broken window. Arthur was about

to follow, when the lady stepped forward and placed herself in his path. After her first sweeping glance around the room, her eyes had remained fastened on him, and she had not as yet marked the withdrawal of the man in red.

"Go back," she said, with an imperious motion of her hand toward the door through which he had come.

It was the imploring appeal which he read in her eyes rather than her attitude of command, which for a moment stayed his feet. But "She is bereft of her senses with fear," he then thought; and passing round her, he rushed on to the window.

The wind had now suddenly veered round, and with Pablo's aid he soon closed the broken shutters and braced them securely with fresh timbers, counting it a happy chance that they did not give way before the storm had in a measure abated.

The necessary task accomplished, Arthur turned promptly to the lady, who

was still there, her eyes full upon him. She wore a pure white robe, and her raven hair fell rippling over her shoulders. Her erstwhile pallid face was now roseate in hue, and her eyes were moonlike in their splendor. She seemed to shine like a starry gem in the half-light of that room. Her beauty smote him to the heart. Bereft of motion, of the power of speech, of connected thought, he stood still, staring. Once more their eyes had met, and this time they clung together with a strange helpless persistence which defied a certain struggling of the will in both. They knew not how long it was before a movement on the part of Pablo awoke them as from a trance. Her bosom was then lifted with an unuttered sigh, and she pointed again toward the door. Nevertheless he seemed to feel that she no longer earnestly desired his absence.

"I grieve to have disobeyed you, but your command was not wise," he found himself saying.

"In the name of God I beg you to go back to your post and come away no more," she answered, not in the voice of displeasure, but in tones that were rather a caress.

He moved instantly to obey, and at the door looked back to find that her glorious eyes still followed him. Thereupon she turned abruptly away and he went out of sight, striving to recall a dissipated vision of enchantment.

It was not upon the slowly abating storm that Arthur Glynn meditated as he paced back and forth in the salon during the remaining hours of that morning, not upon the curious apparition of the man in red at break of day, not upon the Destierros and the dear ones there from whom he had been separated so long, but upon the recluse of Buena Esperanza, the woman so young, so beautiful, so unaccountable, whose eyes had as it were looked into his soul and whose soul he believed to have been revealed to his eyes.

At noon Pablo came to tell him that the front door had been opened and he could now venture forth. Willis had already gone out and ascertained that the stables were intact and the horses safe.

Buena Esperanza had been a striking scene of neglect already; its desolation was now complete and indescribable. The heterogeneous mass of vegetation growing in the abandoned fields, sugar-cane, weeds, and what not, was beaten flat to the earth. The old sugar house was wholly unroofed. Coral-rock fences were blown down, hedges were torn up in places by the roots, and trees lay prostrate everywhere. One-third of the mighty palms lining the avenue had fallen. The roads were impassable for any conceivable vehicle, and poor Pablo saw weeks of labor extending before him.

The volante must perforce be left behind. Willis gave his own horse to his master and prepared to mount and ride on the bare back of the other. Aban-

doning the vain hope of obtaining another glimpse of the recluse, Arthur Glynn sent his compliments and thanks to the Señora, who likewise kept out of sight, and mounting his horse, rode out over the storm-scarred country toward the Destierros.

## IV

### Los Destierros

THE year 1865 was a time of trial in the southern part of the United States, and especially so to the slaveholders, who were left for the most part penniless, the value of their real estate temporarily dropping to zero as a consequence of the extinction of the "patriarchal system" and the results of an unsuccessful war. Biting poverty, however, was not regarded as the worst feature of the situation. The temporary control of the local governments obtained by the freedmen in conjunction with the carpetbagger — the turning of the State upside down and standing it on its head — resulted in a tenfold greater dissatisfaction with the present and alarm for the unknown future.

The multitude remained upon the site of their old firesides until time and better counsels had accomplished the reversal of an unnatural situation, and all the old wounds were healed. The few fled the country and settled down to begin life anew amid strange scenes. Some went to Mexico, some to Canada, some to England, and some — the ill-fated ones — to Brazil. Roger Glynn went to Cuba, and there were those, as indicated, who went farther and fared worse.

Not that his experiment in the difficulties of expatriation was a brilliant success, but he at least carried out his scheme and lived as a Cuban sugar-planter until the day of his death not quite twenty years later. Unlike the emigrants who settled in Brazil, he was fortunate in the possession of the faculty of adapting himself to new surroundings. He also had had long experience in the culture of sugar-cane in Louisiana, and had acquired a practical knowledge of the Spanish language. The

inheritance of an extensive and valuable property in Maryland was the cause, a few years before the war, of his removal to that State, and it was from there that he emigrated with his wife, his four-year-old son, and two negro servants, a woman and a youth.

Having realized every possible dollar from the sale of his depreciated estates, and obtained letters of introduction from Cuban friends in New Orleans, he took the momentous step. After several months spent in Havana, during which time many prospecting tours were made inland, he settled with his family on a purchased sugar plantation near San José, a fair bargain although instant and expensive repairs were necessary, calling the place "Los Destierros" (the Exiles), in lieu of the name of local significance it had previously borne.

Roger Glynn was a man of business. He had inherited the institution of slavery and given it little thought as a moral ques-

tion. He would have continued it in his new field without an atom of compunction, regarding it as a matter of course, but his late severe losses tended to make him chary of a fresh experiment in slave labor; besides, he saw prospects of a gradual extinction of the system in Cuba in the near future. The sugar-cane fields of the Destierros, therefore, were cultivated by free men of color or slaves hired from their masters, with the help of contract-laboring coolies imported to the island from China. This experiment in agriculture in a foreign land, though distinguished by many vexations and disappointments, was, on the whole, fairly successful, and was therefore not abandoned.

It was one thing for the Glynns to expatriate themselves; it was quite another to be willing to see their son grow up with the education and sentiment of the Cubans. The boy Arthur was taught to read English at home, but his education could not stop there. After a few years

spent in a school taught by nuns in San José, an arrangement was made with the cura, a learned man, who instructed the boy in Latin, Greek, history, etc., during the early hours of three days of the week until he had made gratifying progress. It was not, however, until he was past eighteen that Arthur was sent to America and entered the Johns Hopkins University. The same plan was proposed for Philip, the younger brother, but he was as yet only twelve years old, and had just begun serious study under Padre Serrano's direction.

It was during Arthur's first year at college that Mabel Ray, a second cousin, was invited to Cuba, and thenceforward made her home at the Destierros, having lost all her nearer relations. It was in the middle of his last year that one day a cablegram informed him of his father's death, followed within a few hours by another telling him not to come home. The letter that reached him some days later made

little of the difficulties now arising at the Destierros and urged him to complete his course. And though it was a hard thing to do, he had done it.

Nothing but a heroic sense of duty could have induced the widow to pursue this course, prostrated as she was by a death that necessarily brought demoralization to the plantation. She shrank as the bravest woman might shrink from assuming the reins of government dropped from the hands of her energetic husband, whose loss had almost extinguished the light of her life. But after a few days of hopeless grief she rose to the occasion and did battle with her crowding difficulties. The death occurred in the month of January, in the midst of the harvesting or grinding season, which usually extends from the first of December to the middle of April. It was necessary, therefore, for the work to go on promptly, incessantly, until it was finished. There was no time to look for and negotiate with a capable

and trustworthy overseer, no time, indeed, for Arthur to come home and assume control of a business with which he was but imperfectly acquainted, even had he been allowed to make the sacrifice. She must be her own overseer, and with the aid of the faithful Willis, who was at home in the lingo of the laboring classes, she succeeded in filling the rôle.

From earliest dawn until late at night the widow was tireless in her activity, riding over the cane-fields, visiting the mill and the sugar-house, urging, directing, expostulating, the faithful American negro ever at her command, carrying her messages and assisting in enforcing her orders. She encountered many vexations and threatened disasters; for the indolent laborers of the tropics like not to be driven, and there were angry murmurs, especially among the coolies, whose weak constitutions were less able to bear the strain than those of the more hardy blacks. A certain moral support was rendered by the best

spirits among the free negro laborers, who reminded the discontented that after the time of pressure their tasks would be light and their hours of leisure long. The year on a Cuban sugar-estate is necessarily divided into a period of comparative ease and another of incessant effort. For if left too long in the field after it is ripe, the cane deteriorates both in quality and the quantity of juice obtained; during the "season," therefore, time is exceedingly precious.

It was all over at last. The huge crop had been cut, hauled in, the juice expressed and boiled down, the sugar crystallized and finally packed and shipped to market. Mrs. Glynn now had leisure to meditate upon her great loss, though with less of the first poignant anguish from which her continuing labors had served as a useful diversion.

Arthur was to have come home in June, but it was October when he landed at Havana. An invitation to visit Europe without expense, in the company of a

wealthy uncle resident in New York, was the cause of this further delay. He at first refused the invitation, but his mother urged that there was nothing for him to do at the Destierros in the "dead season," and he was finally persuaded to make the best of an opportunity that might never come again.

As he approached the Destierros, accompanied by Willis, on the afternoon after the storm, he noted with great relief that comparatively little damage had been done in the immediate vicinity. The force of a tropical hurricane is usually concentrated within a narrow path, and the Destierros, though seriously threatened, had escaped the full fury visited upon Buena Esperanza. The bright purple skies were no longer obscured, the wet and luxuriant vegetation glistened in the sun, gorgeously colored birds flew back and forth among the trees, and the glimpse of the old house of yellowish stone at the end of the long avenue of palms completed

a picture that brought a rush of fond memories and a gladness of the heart to the young man returning home.

Two ladies awaited him on the veranda. One, a handsome blonde, young and graceful, wearing a becoming white house-dress, was seated luxuriously in a rocking-chair, nonchalantly smoking a fragrant cigarette. The other, of advancing age, with lines of care and grief on her gentle but strong face, stood dressed in dark garments, eagerly watching the approaching horses.

"I wish you would throw away that cigarette, Mabel," said the latter, with a glance of mild reproof.

"Why should I?"

"I know he will not admire it."

"Then let him learn to. Why did you bring me to Cuba, if you didn't want me to adopt the customs of the country?"

The elder lady's only answer to this pouting question was a sigh. The horse-

men were now close at hand. Throwing his bridle to Willis, Arthur leaped to the ground, ran up the steps, and clasped his mother in his arms. With a low glad cry that was almost a sob, the widow fell upon her son's neck and clung to him.

"You have not disappointed me, Arthur," she said presently, withdrawing a little and looking into his honest, affectionate blue eyes. "Roger is gone, but I still have you." Thereupon he took her again in his arms and kissed her tenderly.

"Your cousin Mabel," said Mrs. Glynn, after a little while, presenting him.

"How do you do, Cousin Arthur!" cried Miss Ray, rising and offering him her right hand after transferring the lighted cigarette from her lips to her left.

Arthur Glynn comported himself after a polite and cousinly fashion, but his eyes expressed no admiration as he looked with keen interest at the young lady.

As his mother had foreseen, the cigarette excited in him an indefinable disrelish for the person of his cousin. He turned from her to inquire for his little brother Philip, and was told that the latter, as soon as he could venture forth that morning, had gone to San José to find the anxiously awaited traveller, and had not yet returned.

It was as they sat down to the midday meal a few minutes later that Arthur was asked at what posada in San José he had spent the night, his mother expressing the fear that even the best would be found uncomfortable, especially on such a night. The liveliest surprise and interest were excited by his announcement that he and the negro had been storm-bound at Buena Esperanza. In response to numberless questions, he described all that had occurred, omitting, however, when referring to the incident of the broken window, to speak of either the man in the hood or the strange behavior of the lady.

"Then you did not see the fair recluse at all?" asked Miss Ray, disappointed.

"Yes, I got a glimpse of her."

"Then your fate is sealed," the young lady cried, with a gay laugh. "They say no man escapes who once lays eyes on her. She is a perfect Lorelei, a Circe, a Siren, without caring or trying to be in the least. I am sorry for you, poor cousin."

"I don't wear my heart on my sleeve," retorted Arthur Glynn, with an unreal laugh and a flush on his face that was promptly noted by his mother's jealous eye.

"I shall have something to tell Isabel," continued Miss Ray. "You remember the Rodriguez family, Cousin Arthur? The Doña Isabel will charm you, no doubt. I am going with her and her brother, Don Alfredo, to see the bull-fight next Sunday afternoon. You must go too."

This announcement evidently caused in Arthur Glynn a more pronounced disrelish

than had the spectacle of his cousin with a cigarette between her lips.

"Ah, a bull-fight," he rejoined, without enthusiasm.

"I have never gone to one," said Mrs. Glynn. "A spectacle highly unsuited for ladies, in my opinion." She looked hard at the younger lady while speaking, as if hopeful that she also might be led to express disapproval.

"I think the *killing* of the bull is frightful," the latter admitted. "But then, you needn't look at it. I never do. I always look away. I look at the people. That's what I go for. As for that disgusting brute, the matador, whom they all rave over so, he is intolerable and I never waste a glance on him. The Doñas and the Dons, the gay dresses, the eager faces, the shouting, the excitement — that is what interests me. One *must* go. There's hardly anything else, you know. When we go to Havana and spend a day shopping in Obispo Street and an evening at

the theatre, that is something, but down here there is nothing scarcely but driving in a volante to make a call. You must go to the Plaza de Toros or stagnate. Now if I lived in Baltimore and could go to a ball twice a week," concluded this candid young lady, "I could afford to be too good to witness that 'shocking spectacle,' as Cousin Alice calls it; but as I live in rural Cuba, I can't."

In the late afternoon, Arthur Glynn and his mother mounted horses and rode together over the plantation. From the neighborhood of the old stone mansion, which was embowered in shade and fruit trees, ceibas, Indian laurels, cocoanuts, and palms, they proceeded toward the barracoons of the negroes and coolies, half hidden, some of them, by plantain, banana, and mango trees, and surrounded by cultivated patches devoted to yams and other vegetables, the private property of the tenants. The Asiatics and Africans alike gazed curiously and respectfully at the new

master, and a number of men came forth to greet him.

After a passing glance at the sugar-mill, they rode over the extensive cane-fields, following the roadways made for the ox-teams in the gathering season. At the boundaries of the estate they halted and looked back. The broad expanse of green waving cane, the bordering fruit trees, the brilliant flowers, the blossoming cacti, the coral-rock fences, and hedges overrun with the white night-blooming cereus and the golden jasmine, lent both color and perfume to a picturesque landscape.

"It is a fine old place, mother."

"Yes, but"—sighing—"the prospects are not bright, I fear. For two or three years we have done little more than cover expenses. We need money, Arthur."

"I see no way of getting it unless we can make it out of the estate."

"If you should care for Mabel and she fancy you, the money that is soon to be hers would be more than ample." Mrs.

Glynn spoke with a careless manner that veiled great earnestness. "Your father suggested this," she added.

"But I don't like Mabel, mother."

"She appeared at a disadvantage to-day," the lady ventured after a moment. "She is not all frivolity."

Having said so much, Mrs. Glynn judged it neither prudent nor candid to say more. In her heart she did not truly admire Miss Mabel Ray, and believed her son to be worthy of a higher type of woman. Nevertheless, she continued to entertain the thought; for a fortune, especially a large one, somehow contrives to cover a multitude of faults.

"You may like her better," she added.

"First impressions usually last with me," was the answer.

"Well, Arthur, I shall never urge you. You must please yourself."

Then they rode homeward in the magic glow of the tropical sunset, the mother speaking of other things, the son listening

absently while dreaming of another marriage still more unlikely, but at the thought of which his heart throbbed more quickly and his pulses leaped.

## V

### What Happened in the Church

THE Cuban Sunday, in the recollection of Arthur Glynn, was ever a day of revelry rather than of worship, the impression of the early morning mass being soon effaced in the heat of the cock-main and the clamor of the bull-ring. The churches — almost without exception Roman Catholic — were open throughout the week, however, and he knew there was not the lack of interest in the things of religion, on the part of the gentler sex at least, that might be supposed. There were no Protestants in the family at the Destierros, but there was usually little church-going on Sunday except upon the occasion of some particular festival.

No one was surprised, however, at the announcement made by Arthur on Sunday morning that he was going to church; for he explained that it was in order to see and speak to his old preceptor and friend, Padre Serrano. Of course he did not mention that his haste to visit the cura was owing to the report of the latter's intimacy at Buena Esperanza.

Arthur rode off alone. He had risen late and it was eleven o'clock when he reached San José. The shops and bodegas were doing a thriving business, and there was the sound of music and laughter from the interior of private dwellings. Nevertheless the streets were not populous, and Arthur conjectured that ere this the mass had been said, the señoras had gone home to smoke and the señors to the cockpit to bet. He determined, however, to visit the church on the chance of finding Padre Serrano still lingering there; and if not, to seek him at his house.

He saw at once that the worshippers,

with two or three exceptions, had indeed departed, and there was no sign of the cura. The interior of the church presented the only suggestion of the proverbial Sabbath stillness to be found anywhere in San José.

Arthur Glynn felt attracted by this atmosphere of peaceful and solemn repose. He wanted to reflect, to analyze his feelings, to go over in mind the questions he would put to Padre Serrano with reference to those strange people at Buena Esperanza. He therefore walked quietly up the right aisle and sat down in a chair midway of the church in the shadow of a pillar supporting the roof.

On his right, only a few feet distant, was a small chapel in which were an altar and two or three characteristic pictures. Against the railing across the entrance kneeled a woman dressed neatly in black, her head and shoulders obscured in the undulations of a lace mantilla also of black. The observer could not see her face, but

he knew that it was lifted toward the altar and that she was praying. There seemed to be an expression of trustful devotion more marked than was common in her very attitude, and this pleased Arthur Glynn. He could not be called devout, but his mother, a good Catholic, had taught him veneration, and he respected and admired devotion in others.

Presently a small young man in faultless attire came noiselessly down the aisle, passed Arthur Glynn without observing him, turned toward the little chapel on the right, and kneeled down within three feet of the woman in black. This was none other than the handsome Sebastiano who on a previous Sunday had attempted in vain to secure recognition from the fair recluse.

Arthur Glynn would have thought nothing of the newcomer's choice of a place to pray, had it not shortly appeared that he was not praying at all, but speaking earnestly to the woman beside whom he had knelt,

and who, from certain movements that she made, apparently resented the intrusion.

The astonished observer sat within twelve feet; listening intently, as well as looking with all his eyes at so unusual a scene, he directly heard these words uttered in low, passionate tones:

"Have pity, Señorita. I have been forced to this seeming sacrilege by your cruel indifference to my efforts to become known to you."

"And you would thrust your acquaintance upon me?" was the indignant rejoinder. "What right has a stranger to intrude upon my devotions? Remove yourself, sir!"

"Have you no pity for even an unknown lover's breaking heart?" was the impassioned plea that followed.

"Leave me, Señor, or I shall myself be forced to go." This with outraged voice and gesture.

Arthur Glynn waited just long enough to see that the command would not be

obeyed, then he determined to interfere. It filled him with wrath to see that any woman, whether princess or peasant, should be forced to submit to such persecution at the hands of an undesired admirer, and there was a threatening look in his eyes as he rose and stepped noiselessly forward.

Halting within arm's length, without a thought of the possible consequences, he seized the unconscious little Sebastiano by his collar and the back seam of his spotless trousers and threw him clattering on hands and knees over the marble tiles of the floor some ten feet away.

Then he turned to the lady, who had risen in alarm, and stood face to face with the recluse of Buena Esperanza. Once more their eyes met and embraced, each momentarily forgetting all else, even that humiliated gallant now picking himself up furiously from the floor. It seemed to Arthur Glynn that the rarest graces humanity is heir to had been lavished upon this pale, slender creature standing there before him

in her plain, sombre garb. The beauty of her soul looked out from her fearless eyes and pierced his heart as with a conquering sword. A strange sympathetic thrill coursed through his veins, as it were the flowing of an unseen current from the inmost springs of her young life. He felt the touch of invisible bonds, and yielded to them gladly.

And she? The ardor of his countenance was absent from her own, but her great eyes which burned magnetic fires clung to him persistently, as if imploring him to go yet praying him to stay. He had surrendered; she wished to, but would not. Standing silent, looking deep into her noble, fearless eyes, he beheld the passion and sadness, the conflicting despair and hope, the struggling coquetries even, of a woman's tried and battling soul; but triumphant over all the sweet gentleness of resignation, and an atmosphere of firm resolution to die if need be for a venerated ideal, — all this in that silent eloquence of her eyes.



PROPERTY OF
TO
NOT TO BE TAKEN
FROM THE CLUB ROOMS

There came the sound of feet approaching over the stone floor. Her eyes fell instantly away from his, and her face became rapidly cold and stern. Instinctively he felt that this coldness and sternness were for herself, not for him.

"Gracias, Señor. You are brave and courteous; I thank you from my heart. A Dios!"

This was her speech, in a low tone that thrilled him, as with one swift glance she walked past him to join the Señora Duran, who was approaching from another place of prayer. And he, inwardly smiling and dreaming of Elysian fields, looked after her, noting every movement of her body with a fulness of admiration and content, until the two were lost to view beyond the doors of the church. Then he seemed to see Sebastiano's handsome face, distorted with fury, appearing from beyond a pillar and drawing near, and with a great effort he withdrew himself from roseate abstractions and shut his heart to its flood-tide of exultation.

"I am Sebastiano Rios of San José," announced the unfortunate little man, as though spitting forth his words, "and nothing but blood will answer for what has happened this day. Where will my friends find the Señor?"

"I am Arthur Glynn, of the Destierros, — at your service whenever you like. But I must tell you this: few men shoot or fence better than I — or so I have been told. If you must fight, I can't say no, but, frankly, I think you had better not. If you choose to think better of it, you need not fear talk. What has happened is known only to the lady and myself. She owes you no kindness, but she is, I am sure, too generous to speak; and I, on my part, engage to say nothing, provided you trouble her no more."

This well-meant speech was fresh gall and wormwood to the wounded spirit of Sebastiano Rios, and as his enemy turned and walked away he stood helpless in his place, too enraged to speak.

What had just occurred rendered an interview with Padre Serrano only the more urgently desirable. His horse was waiting at a neighboring posada, but Arthur decided to walk to the cura's house, which he knew to be close at hand. The man-servant, a negro, who presently answered his summons and recognized him with smiles and friendly and respectful words of welcome, reported that his master had not yet returned home.

"He may be walking — in the direction of the cockpit. He likes to walk that way," suggested the discreet servitor.

"Thank you, Alesandro," said Arthur, smiling, "I had thought of that. I'll go and meet him."

## VI

### The Padre's Advice

EVERY Cuban town has its cock "main" or "pit," where the national passion for gambling finds one of its vents. The pit in San José was a circular amphitheatre some thirty or forty feet in diameter, roofed over and latticed in, with a striking resemblance to an immense cage. In the seats raised in a circle one above another about the central ring or arena were now gathered all sorts and conditions of men: lily-white caballeros with cascarilla on their faces, bronzed white laborers in holiday attire, swarthy mixed bloods in tatters or in finery, yellow, melancholy coolies, and negroes of every type and every shade. All these became one

shouting and gesticulating mob as the crisis of the fight approached.

Paying the fee and elbowing his way into the crowded place, Arthur with some difficulty reached a point whence the arena could be overlooked. Two game-cocks pitted against each other were being passed in review, held in the hands of their respective owners, and there was much giving and taking of bets. Arthur was slightly shocked, but not surprised, to see that one of the owners was none other than Padre Serrano, who looked as self-possessed as if he were in church, and gazed proudly and fondly upon his bird. The discovery of his little brother Phil on the other side of the ring in the act of staking a lottery ticket, which he held up to view, on the chances of the cura's promising bird was to Arthur a source of more serious concern.

"Cousin Mabel, it seems," he mused, "is not the only one at the Destierros who is absorbing the customs of the country."

Little Phil was a fine-looking boy of twelve, with dark hair and almost the bronzed complexion of a native. He was manly and fearless in his demeanor, but when presently he caught his elder brother's eye he started guiltily. Instead of frowning, Arthur smiled; whereupon the youngster smiled back, as if reassured. "I can do more with him if I gain his confidence," was Arthur's thought. "He is not much to blame, anyhow, for doing what he sees his preceptor do."

The two game-cocks were clipped from head to tail, their combs being trimmed close to the crown, and their heads and necks, to the length of three inches, completely plucked of all feathers. The flesh thus left bare had been rubbed with rum until it had hardened. The birds had evidently been long in training. There was no struggling to free themselves from the hands that held them; they, indeed, calmly surveyed the assembled crowd as if they perfectly understood the situation.

The bets having been made and taken, the umpires affixed steel gaffs to the spurs of the contesting cocks and gently placed them opposite each other on the sawdust-covered ground inside the ring; whereupon both crowed loudly and eyed each other with threatening mien.

After a tentative advance and retreat, once or twice repeated, each bird meanwhile pretending to peck at supposed grains of corn, thus attempting to draw on his antagonist, the two fighters presently rushed fiercely upon each other, at no time paying the slightest attention to the shouts or jeers of the excited people.

Without the artificial spurs, the struggle might have lasted an hour; with them it came to an end at the expiration of about ten minutes. Blood flowed from pierced necks, eyes were pecked out, wings and legs were broken in short order, the excitement, meanwhile, intensifying. The bird longest in dying was the winner, and this, to Arthur's genuine satisfaction,

chanced *not* to be Padre Serrano's. It was better, he thought, for little Phil to lose than to win. From their long faces, it was quite evident that neither the youngster nor the cura shared this opinion.

Many in the cockpit had been smoking, and the air was stifling. In the movement of the crowd, that was now general, Arthur made his way to Padre Serrano's side.

"You are not in luck to-day," he said, after being warmly greeted.

"Ah, no; I am punished for my frivolity," was the answer, with a doleful smile and plaintive shrug.

Being informed that the young man wished private speech with him, the Padre invited him to his house and proceeded to lead the way. Little Phil now joined them, spoke regretfully to the priest of the loss he had sustained, but said nothing of the lottery ticket which he himself had risked and lost.

"Another time be wise enough not to

bet," said Arthur, taking the boy aside, when they reached the open air. On his own part he was wise enough not to be severe.

"Mamma doesn't know that I come here," said little Phil, frankly.

"And I shan't worry her by telling her," was the answer. "But I hope you won't come again until you are older, or if you do, that you won't bet. I wouldn't buy another lottery ticket, either, if I were you. In both cases it is nothing but gambling. Mother will be sorry to see her little Phil grow up to be a Cuban gambler."

"And I don't mean to, either," the boy declared, evidently not unmoved by this appeal.

The house of Padre Serrano was similar to the average dwelling of the better class in San José, — a massive structure of yellow stone, with a small court in the centre, and huge, barred, curtainless windows, opening on the street. Arthur was led

into a lofty and cool sitting-room, the chief feature of which was, as usual, a double row of cane-bottom rocking-chairs, each being flanked by a convenient cuspidor. A few inartistic pictures on the walls completed the furnishing of the room.

They were scarcely seated when Alesandro, the black man-servant, appeared in neat attire and bringing a table. This being placed between the host and his guest, the breakfast or midday meal was served, consisting of pine-apples and oranges, eggs, broiled fowl, a vegetable seasoned with garlic, chili colorado, Cataline wine, coffee and cigars.

"Your mother does not approve of cock-fighting and betting," remarked Padre Serrano, serenely.

"Most likely not."

"Especially in the case of churchmen," with a smile.

"I can well believe it."

"As for me, I do not defend it. I only *do* it," the Padre remarked with complete

frankness. "*Mea culpa.* It is my only vice."

Arthur thought this statement absolutely sincere, as it doubtless was. He knew the priest to be a worthy man and a most generous. Many stories were current of his kind offices to the poor and distressed, as well as to the rich in their hour of need. When others fled from pestilence-swept neighborhoods, he fearlessly remained and acted day and night in the double capacity of priest and nurse, always passing through the ordeal unscathed, as if rendered invulnerable by the very exalted disinterestedness of his motives. He did not shun even the leper, and no one ever appealed to him in vain. The poorest laborer, the humblest negro, the most wretched coolie, was assured of his sympathy. The licensed beggar alone avoided him, having learned from experience to expect a stern rebuke in lieu of alms. He was a man of deeds as well as words, and deeds that were not done to be seen of men.

"*Peccatum est,*" continued the Padre, who was fond of employing his familiar Latin when he was in the company of an intelligent person, "but it is not one of the graver sins. It is better than to enrich oneself at the expense of the church and of the poor, and there have been churchmen who did that."

"True."

"It is better than to forsake one's vows and bring into the world a nameless brood, and there have been men called churchmen who did that."

"Assuredly."

"It is better — but all this does not excuse. *Mea culpa!* It is my only temptation."

"And yet you are still young, Padre," said Arthur with a curious, wondering air. "One would think your strongest temptation would be to love. Is there nothing in a woman's beautiful face —"

"Once there was, yes. But I always conquered. I said to myself: '*Cogito hoc*

*et intendo hoc, sed quia peccatum est, non faciam illud.'* "

As he spoke the priest's eyes rested absently upon the negro who had come in, and the latter, supposing he had been addressed, answered, —

"Master, you forget; I do not understand English."

"Do not grieve, my good Alesandro," said the Padre, exchanging a smiling glance with his guest; "there are Englishmen who would not have understood me any better. You may remove the table."

After they had lighted fresh cigars Arthur spoke of Buena Esperanza and related so much of his experience there as he thought proper, confessing that this was the subject on which he had sought private speech with his host. What did the cura know of those strange people? Why were they thus secluded? For every atom of information he would be deeply grateful.

"It is not idle curiosity that moves me," he concluded earnestly.

The priest listened in silence with knitted brows. "You have seen the younger lady, and, like others before you, you wish to see her again?" he at length inquired.

"Y—es." Then, with more frankness: "I wish it eagerly."

"I can tell you nothing that you do not know already. A priest may listen to confession, but he may not talk. But if you wish it, I can advise you."

"What do you advise me?"

"To go no more to Buena Esperanza—to try no more to see Carita Ramirez."

Arthur Glynn laughed softly, and there was in that laugh a challenge to fate. "Do you take me for a child?" he asked.

"I warn you out of my love for you," was the solemn answer. "If you fail of your desire, as I doubt not you will, you will but bring upon yourself useless pain. And if you succeed, you but enter upon a

path that leads to — but no, you will never succeed."

"Is she, then, a snare to lure men to destruction?"

"She is an angel of heaven."

"You have told me all I need to know!" cried Arthur Glynn, starting to his feet. "I knew it, I felt it, in spite of everything."

"Ah, but you do not understand," the priest urged, anxiously. "She is an angel, but she is one to whom God hath given to quaff the bitter cup. Keep away — keep away — for your own sake and for hers."

"Prove to me that you are right by telling me all, and I will obey you. Otherwise I will not — can not — keep away."

"Then may our Lady watch over you, Arturo. I cannot tell you."

Further discussion was clearly useless, and nothing more was said. Their cigars being now finished, Padre Serrano invited his guest to remain and accompany him to the Plaza de Toros at four o'clock,

proposing meanwhile the inevitable siesta. Arthur consented, and was shown to a cool, dimly lighted chamber, where he lay down upon a bed made of a few light, gorgeous coverlets spread on the woven-wire spring of a mosquito-netting-draped bed, but all tendency to slumber was successfully banished by the brightness of anticipation and hope that now illumined his mind, in spite of the Padre's ominous warning.

## VII

### Lovers, Toreadors, and Bulls

BY half-past three the October midday heat was decreasing and it was possible to venture out without serious discomfort. It was about this hour that Don Alfredo Rodriguez appeared in the avenue of palms at the Destierros, accompanied by his handsome sister, the Doña Isabel.

The latter rode alone in a roomy volante which was driven by a negro postilion astride of one of the horses. She was dressed in yellow with no head covering other than a black silken veil richly wrought and gathered at the back, a costume that well became her olive complexion, midnight eyes, and raven hair. In her hand she carried a many-colored fan

of rich material, which glittered like a gorgeous butterfly in the intense sunshine.

Don Alfredo was arrayed in stiff spotless linen and sat majestically upon a milk-white Andalusian mule, with cropped mane and shaved tail, the latter tied at the tip with a bright ribbon. From the holsters of his antique Spanish saddle, which glittered with silver mountings, two formidable pistols projected, and attached to his waist was a long Toledo blade in an ornamented scabbard. Moreover, his hands sparkled with costly rings, and he wore a prodigious gold watch-chain. This magnificent gentleman of rural Cuba was the owner of a number of spirited horses, but for particularly festive occasions preferred his white mule.

Before they could alight Miss Mabel Ray appeared and allowed Don Alfredo to gallantly assist her to a seat in the volante. She wore a pretty American hat and a white summer gown, gay with the latest ornaments ordained by fashion. The

contrast between an American and Cuban beauty was marked, but not damaging to either. There could be no doubt which type was given the preference by the stately Don, who rode alongside, scarcely ever lifting his eyes from the face of the "Americana hermosa," as the fairer of the two was styled when a toast was drunk in her honor.

The Doña Isabel was now the only unsatisfied member of this trio. She had expected Arthur Glynn to appear, as had also her brother. Miss Ray politely forestalled inquiry by informing them that he had not returned from San José, and doubtless they would meet him at the Plaza de Toros.

"I wish we were going to a ball," she remarked to the Don in English, as they passed out of the avenue and took the San José road. "I don't like bull-fights."

"It likes not well to me neither," agreed the Cuban, with as much lack of sincerity as of English idiom. "But Felipe, Felipe

Ocaña, el matador, — he give us a grand fight this evaning. Yes, he eez wonderfool — Felipe."

"He is disgusting."

Don Alfredo judged it best to speak of other things, and he presently asked:

"Of English poet, Mees Ray, which is agreable to you more, Tenneesown or Shake-a-speare?"

"It is the fashion, of course, to admire Shakespeare more, but I'd rather read Tennyson," said Miss Ray, slightly bored.

"Both are to me very agradable," declared the Don, proud of his knowledge of English literature. "The soliloquee of Hamlet I mucho admeer," he added, and proceeded to recite it, Miss Ray meanwhile biting her lip to save herself from laughing outright. "Eez it not admeerable?" he asked in conclusion.

"Yes, indeed; especially with your pronunciation."

Believing that he had been complimented, poor Don Alfredo made a stately

bow, with his hand on his heart. In his elation he ventured another quotation from Hamlet:

> "'Doot that the stars are feer;
> Doot that the sun doth mōve,
> Doot truth to be a leear,
> But nevare doot I lōve.'"

Then, recollecting her preference for Tennyson, he referred to "Lady Clara Vere de Vere," quoting the admirable sentiment to the effect that it is only noble to be "gude," and that kind hearts are more than coronets, and "seemple" faith than Norman "blude."

Before Miss Ray blossomed into womanhood Don Alfredo was seen little at the Destierros, and when he did appear he spoke Spanish. He had come in contact with few English-speaking people and had learned his English out of books and under the direction of a Spanish teacher who could not speak the language at all, the process being similar to that necessa-

rily employed by the American or English student in acquiring a knowledge of Greek. He grasped the sense of the English poets, and really delighted in them, but was accustomed to read them aloud in the ridiculous manner indicated. Not less ridiculous, perhaps, would be the rendition of Homer or Virgil by some of our grave and learned scholars, could they but be overheard by the ancient Roman or Greek.

All this was mystery to the Doña Isabel. "You forget, my learned brother, that I don't understand English," she said at last, sweetly and poutingly, and after that, although by no means perfectly at home in Spanish, Miss Ray would suffer no more of the Don's labored English.

The Plaza de Toros of San José, so called after the more celebrated place of that name in Havana, contained an amphitheatre capable of seating more than two thousand spectators. The seats were arranged in circles one above another

around and at a secure height above an extensive arena. When Don Alfredo's party arrived and were shown to their places, scarcely a seat was still vacant. It was expected to be one of the most spirited contests of the season, and all the world of San José and the surrounding country wished to be present. The crowds of laughing and chatting people, the bright colors worn by the señoras and señoritas, their sparkling jewelled fans, the picturesque costumes of the toreadors, together formed a brilliant and interesting spectacle.

True to her declaration, Miss Ray looked into the arena but little and occupied herself in scanning the assembly, admiring costumes and searching for familiar faces. Among those which she promptly located were Padre Serrano's and Arthur Glynn's. The latter was likewise scanning the assembly, but in the search of one particular face only. Aside from Pablo, who sat in one of the cheaper seats, he saw no representatives of Buena

Esperanza. A momentary disappointment was followed by a sense of satisfaction. Being herself, he reasoned, she could take no pleasure in this sanguinary spectacle.

Presently a large bull, let loose from apartments beneath the seats, dashed madly through an open door into the arena. Confused by the bright sunshine and startled at sight of the assembled people, he stopped short and pawed the ground excitedly while glaring from side to side. In the arena were three chulos on foot and two picadors on horseback, the business of the former, as soon appeared, being to attract the bull with their red scarfs, and then, while adroitly leaping beyond reach of his horns, to thrust into his neck and sides banderillas, or barbed darts, ornamented with ribbons. The mounted picadors excited the bull to frenzy by thrusts with a long pole spiked at each end, and capable of inflicting painful but not dangerous wounds.

Thus tormented, the beast soon became frantic, and was almost continually engaged in a charge at one or another of his enemies. Finding the chulos too wary for him, he now rushed fiercely at one of the horses, and in spite of the repeated and painful wounds inflicted by the picador, he persisted until he had ripped the horse's bowels open with his horns and thrown him to the ground with his rider under him.

At this critical moment the chulos rushed to the rescue, drawing off the bull by attacking him and flaunting their red scarfs before his eyes. So the picturesque but brutal struggle went on for a long while. In the course of it two other horses were killed in a similar manner, one rider was seriously hurt by a fall beneath his horse, and a chulo was caught on the horns of the maddened beast, tossed in the air, and, when rescued, was found to have a deep and dangerous wound in his side.

Finally, there was another flourish of trumpets, the chulos and picadors retired, and Felipe Ocaña, a celebrated matador, entered the arena to face the bull alone, a scarlet flag in one hand and a naked Toledo blade in the other. The bull had ere this begun to fag, but seemed to take courage at sight of a single foe. Many times he rushed fast and furiously, and, as would seem to threaten, fatally upon his enemy, who as many times leaped skilfully out of harm's way, meanwhile thrusting with his sword and inflicting wounds from which the poor beast bled profusely.

At last with a hoarse bellow the doomed bull rushed forward once more with head bent down. This time the matador did not leap aside, but calmly withstood the shock, and with a firm and practised hand drove his sword into the back of the animal's neck just behind the horns. The result was immediate. The great beast staggered, swayed from side to side, and

then fell dead, whereupon, with wild enthusiasm, the spectators shouted again and again: "Viva Ocaña! Viva Ocaña!"

Three more bulls having been similarly tormented and slaughtered, the Sunday afternoon's bloody entertainment came to an end. The crowd poured into the streets of the town, chatting gayly, in a state of no little exhilaration resulting from their emotions having been stirred, their senses thrilled, and their flesh having been made to creep. There is that in the unschooled human heart that takes delight even in cruelty.

Arthur Glynn took leave of the Padre, joined Don Alfredo's party, and rode home with them. The return journey was much more agreeable to the handsome Doña Isabel. It mattered not how industriously her brother manufactured grotesque English phrases for the ear of Miss Ray, so long as she herself was furnished with an agreeable cavalier who rode on her own side of the volante conversing in fluent Spanish.

They started off in the red glow of the sunset, but in a few minutes it was night, and the golden, glowing, tropic moon, which is never pale as in the North, rose above them in all its splendor until the jewelled fan of the Doña Isabel, over which she cast coquettish glances at her caballero, glistened almost as brilliantly as in the vanished sunshine.

## VIII

### In the Latticed Bower

ON the morrow Arthur Glynn rose betimes and busied himself, or appeared to busy himself, in looking into the affairs of the Destierros plantation; but his watchful mother observed with a troubled mind that he was distrait, and, in spite of evident effort, that he really accomplished nothing. Her suggestions met no intelligent response; she saw that he was absorbed in matters of which he did not choose to speak and that she must wait.

She vaguely divined the situation, but was far from supposing that he was in the passionate ferment of a first deep love. Arthur Glynn had seen beauty before and not been charmed, and he had felt drawn

to women who were beautiful to none but him; but in the recluse of Buena Esperanza all that he had set before his mind's eye as desirable seemed united. Her image was engraven on his heart. The inner sight and recollection of her transfigured every object or stretch of landscape upon which he might chance to rest his eyes. Everywhere he saw her — Carita! — the central feature of a luminous, roseate cloud of fancy. And always with that sweet, unconscious promise of surrender in her eyes.

While riding over the estate in the late afternoon, on a sudden impulse he took the road that led to Buena Esperanza, and half an hour later found himself advancing toward the residencia by the avenue of royal palms. In a brightness of anticipation and hope that exhilarated his being like virile wine, he rapped loudly and confidently upon the door. While waiting, he observed that although the fallen palms had been removed from the

avenue, the débris of the storm was still scattered everywhere else. And so, when Pablo opened the door, he remarked to him that the track of the hurricane was still visible.

"Ah, yes, Señor, Pablo has not a thousand arms," was the answer, with a doleful shrug. "But how can I serve the Señor to-day?"

"Tell the ladies that I have called."

Pablo took the visiting-card that was given him and departed, frowning and shaking his head. Arthur waited impatiently, standing in the reception-room. In a few moments the worthy serving-man returned and reported that the Señora wished to express her thanks for the courtesy, but that both ladies desired to be excused. "I could have told you as much," added Pablo, with sympathy.

Without comment Arthur went out, mounted his horse, and rode away through the long avenue of palms. He felt angry only with the Señora. This was her

doing, hers only. She would find that he was not to be disposed of so easily. He could wait.

On his way out he noted off the avenue, some fifty yards to the left, in a grove of fruit trees, a latticed bower, or retreat, over which the jasmine and night-blooming cereus clambered luxuriantly. Surely that must be one of her haunts, and there must be times when she could be found there.

Possessed by this idea, at the bottom of the avenue he leaped to the ground, secured his horse, and walked back through the shrubbery to the left. She might not, indeed, be found there, but he could leave her a sign, a letter, perhaps. To establish communication with her was his fixed and unalterable purpose, and he did not stop to consider proprieties.

The latticed bower was silent and vacant, but showed signs of frequent occupancy. The vines were carefully trimmed and the stone floor neatly swept. There

was more than this; on a long rustic seat he espied some sheets of paper written upon with pencil and held down in their place by a bit of coral-rock. A book also lay near. Glancing into it, he saw with emotions of surprise and reverence that it was a translation of the *Imitation of Christ* of Thomas à Kempis. Forgetting for the moment that he was intruding upon a privacy that should be sacred, he lifted one of the papers from under the stone and read some lines of verse that may be freely translated thus: —

"Is it not better to kneel for a lifetime on the thorns of affliction, to let the young heart wither and grow old in cheerless solitude, than to forget duty and lie upon down and drink to the full of the cup of Circe? The road to heaven is through the cleansing fires of purgatory. Be still, then, my fainting heart; cease thy sighs and yearnings, and await eternity's severance of thy chains. If love were all, and if it were not that love for me is but as a

withered dying creature decked out for a day in bright show and jewels, if it brought forgetfulness and exemption, then might I yield. But love is not all, and the cold, inextinguishable star of duty shines on and on, and the sinner cannot blind his eyes to his broken faith. Help me, O blessed Jesu, not to forget, not to yield, even though my striving spirit be bruised and broken!"

A sense of shame and regret soon stirred within Arthur Glynn, and he hastened to put the sheet of paper back in its place. But as he read, a great joy filled his soul; none but his sweet saint could have written these words, and they were the revelation of a character before which he prostrated himself in admiration.

He moved to the door of the latticed bower and looked out hopefully, and yet in sore pain, thirsting for the sight of her. The declining sun stood forth a great red ball above the encircling hills, the purple deepened in the over-canopying skies, the

wind shook the flowering branches of the fruit trees, and filled the glorious evening with delicate fragrance and haunting music.

As he took note of all this, Carita Ramirez suddenly appeared before him. She was approaching the bower from among the trees, a wreath of the yellow bell-like jasmine crowning her dark, clustering hair and a scarlet pomegranate blossom in her hand, — proofs to him, in spite of the joyless existence she had chosen, of an inextinguishable love of life and pleasure in her own beauty.

In a moment now she saw him, in evident dismay, but walked straight forward with scarcely a pause. The grace and lightness of her movements appealed to him with all the force of a newly discovered charm. He stood still, speaking no word, and she came on until no more than a space of three feet remained between them. He had heard her voice before, — once during the howling of the storm, once in the

stillness of the church, — but its beauty had not appeared to him as now, although her words, spoken in that rich soft contralto, were such as to pierce his heart: —

"You should not come here. You must go away."

"I cannot go," he answered in great pain. The sadness of his face seemed momentarily to soften, it might be, to please her; for there appeared a flash of tenderness in her eyes. He did not fail to mark it. Forgetting caution, doubts, perplexities, everything, he told her that he lived upon the thought of her and began to pour out all the ardor of a new, absorbing love, to a not unwilling ear, as he was not slow to see. Now, as heretofore, her look was not unfriendly — he urged. To be thus drawn together implied a divinely appointed fitness of their souls; surely they were formed for one another. Was all this to be lightly disregarded? Not by him, — he could not. Till now he had not lived, till now he had

not dreamed, what that life could be the soul of which was love.

"Will you not even hear me?" he begged, as she turned her face away.

"You must go — at once," she said slowly, like one forced. Then, with something like a sob, "Do not think me harsh — forgive me; but I must see you no more."

The evidence of a slight weakening excited him to boldness. He seized her hand and held it and kissed it. And she at first made no motion to withdraw it, but stood passive, looking at him fixedly, her eyes glowing with the dawn of a great new joy. Only for a moment, then she withdrew her hand almost rudely and stood further off.

"Ah, you do not trust me," he said frantically, losing hope.

"I fear to trust myself," she answered with a noble frankness, but averting her face. "I think only good of you, but it is not the will of God that I should love you."

"Why not? You can at least, in pity, tell me why not?" Then as she faltered and seemed shaken, "Surely you are wrong."

"I am not wrong. Between you and me a great gulf yawns. Go now. It is useless to say more. Go —" she put out her hand to him still without looking at him — "and remember that I think well of you, that I would gladly suffer to save you pain, but I can see you no more."

Her hand was again at his lips, and she suffered it so to rest one instant, while visibly trembling, then snatched it away and ran from him.

"Carita! Carita mia!"

His hands followed after her, but his feet were stayed. He suffered himself to cry out with all his heart in his voice, but dared not follow. He stood still until the crowding fruit trees shut her from his sight, then turned and walked reeling through the shrubbery toward his horse.

And yet he was not cast down, being

rather uplifted upon the wings of hope. He reflected in a trance-like ecstasy that her manner was a seeming betrayal; it might be that, in spite of her command, she loved him, or was soon to love him. "See you no more? You ask too much, Carita — my Carita!" he cried out wildly, with the joy and laughter of an exulting heart.

The sunset's roseate blush quivered and leaped before him as if partaking of this joy; a thrill of sympathy and delight passed over the earth and sky. The trees gave themselves with trembling rapture to the caress of the soft night breeze. The very stones beneath his feet seemed attuned to the magic of the hour and in concord with his exultant happiness.

But ere the morrow this wildness of exhilaration had given place to more sober thought. On the morrow, too, there came to him a letter written in that hand which he had seen on the sheets of paper in the latticed bower and would never

mistake for another. "If you truly care for me," it read, "seek to speak with me no more. In the name of kindness, of pity, of the blessed Jesu, I beseech you to grant me this, the only boon I can ever crave at your hands. For your own sake as well as mine I humbly implore you."

This was all, but it was enough to darken the noonday sun and awaken Arthur Glynn to an unknown weariness and horror of life.

Carita ran breathlessly until she thought she might be observed from the residencia. She then approached the house, walking rapidly, and, having entered, was careful to avoid the quarter inhabited by the Señora and herself. Ascending to the second story, she entered a room which opened on the balcony above the court. This apartment was fitted up as an oratory, with an altar and candlesticks, pictures of the Virgin and saints, and an image of the Lord upon the cross. Here, all alone,

prostrate before the altar, Carita wept bitter tears and prayed and reflected. "Give me strength and courage, O Jesu, give me power not to yield, dear Lord," was the burden of her supplication. It was after an hour spent thus that she went to her room and wrote the letter that reached Arthur Glynn.

But the next morning, standing alone among the plants of the fragrant court, she impulsively caught up a bit of the tender, clinging love vine and threw it over her shoulder, murmuring "Arturo!" And although night and morning she repeated before the altar the self-same supplication, her eyes glowed and her cheeks burned with the fiery joy of her soul when, a day or two later, she observed that the bit of love vine which had fallen upon a branch of the coral tree was alive and sending forth new tendrils. It was not to die, but would live and thrive, a hopeful omen for the whispered love of her who cast it there! And so, while praying for strength to bear

her cross and sternly resolving not to yield, did she contrive to feed her hungering soul with the shadow of a hope.

It was late the same afternoon that Padre Serrano appeared at Buena Esperanza. The Señora Duran was first closeted with him to be shriven, then came the turn of the younger lady, who freely confessed her real or imagined sins of commission and omission, with a single reservation: she made no mention of the little love vine clinging to the coral tree in the court. The good Padre might enjoin her to tear it from its place and allow it to wither and die on the inhospitable stones, and to this she could not bring herself to consent. She held firmly to her vow as ever, but that bit of love vine, typical of the one ray of light in the darkness of her life, should be left to flourish in the warmth of the sun.

At dark the candles were lighted on the altar in the oratory, and then Padre Serrano appeared in the robes of his office

and recited the vesper service, the Señora, Carita, Pablo, and the woman-servant being all assembled there, listening devoutly on their knees. The doors opening on the balcony were thrown wide, and the light of the candles fell faintly across the court, dimly outlining a human figure kneeling behind the opposite balustrade with face turned toward the distant altar and hands uplifted in supplication. There was, then, a fifth person who assisted at this night service.

The set ritual concluded, Padre Serrano faced the penitents, and during some ten minutes addressed to them an earnest exhortation. His words were remarkable for their fervor and piety, but more so for the loud tones in which they were uttered, — quite unnecessarily loud, indeed, had they not been evidently intended to reach the kneeling figure on the far veranda. His homily concluded, the Padre descended among his hearers and said to them: —

"And now remove yourselves, my children. Don Ignacio must be shriven."

Whereupon they all left the oratory by an inner door, and, having given them time to reach distant apartments of the house and close the doors after them, the Padre ventured out on the veranda. Then sinking upon his knees, and leaning against the balustrade, he began to speak across to the bowed figure on the balcony overlooking the opposite side of the court.

## IX

### Capitan Zorilla

PADRE SERRANO mounted his horse and rode away at eight o'clock. An hour later Pablo knocked at the door of the Señora's sitting-room and was told to enter. The two ladies sat in desultory converse, while the younger occupied herself with an altar cloth which she was embroidering, and the elder smoked her final (the sixth) cigar for the day.

"El Capitan Zorilla," announced Pablo. "He wishes to speak to Don Ignacio. He would also see the ladies, if they will honor him."

"Why these fine words?" ejaculated the Señora, impatiently. "He wishes to see the *ladies*, indeed! Little he cares to see me."

Carita Ramirez rose with an uneasy air. "I will announce him," she said, and went out. A few moments later the Señora and Pablo, who still tarried, distinctly heard the ringing of a small bell.

"How does el capitan seem to-night?" asked the Señora.

"Discontented, restless, watchful," was the substance of Pablo's report.

"He is ready," said Carita, reëntering the room a few minutes later. "Go down, Pablo, and conduct the Señor Zorilla to the east balcony."

The man waiting in the salon did not sit down, but walked restlessly back and forth until Pablo reëntered. He was slightly under medium height, but powerful in build and of a commanding presence. The pistols in his belt and the Toledo blade swinging at his side in a highly ornamented scabbard only accentuated his native air of authority. The elements of the born leader of men were in him. He was comparatively young,

his black hair was long and thick, his eyes piercing, and his swarthy face was strong and bold in outline as well as in expression. In his own rude, powerful way he was a handsome man, but above all a man of will and action.

As he waited, he continually snapped a riding-whip which he carried in his hand, indicating not only impatience but a surplus of energy. He had no cause of complaint, however, for Pablo appeared after a short delay and conducted him to the upper story of the house and thence to the balcony on the east side of the court, pointing to a rocking-chair on the identical spot where Padre Serrano had recently kneeled. From this point Zorilla discovered a dimly outlined figure seated on the veranda across the court, and as Pablo quietly and quickly withdrew, he called out, —

"Are you there, Don Ignacio? Buenas tardes!"

"It is you, Antonio?" was the husky but firm response.

"It is I, the captain, the *bandit*, the malicious would say."

"And not without reason, I fear, Antonio."

"Muy bien! what would you have? Even a patriot must live."

"Ah, yes, he should live indeed, but without despoiling the helpless and bringing disgrace upon his cause."

"Zorilla has never preyed upon the helpless," was the sharp retort.

"But it is done in your name and that of the other chiefs."

"Our predatory raids," the other insisted, "are always directed against rich and loyal 'sugar noblemen' who are allied with our enemies. The friends of Spanish rule are the foes of our country, and it is legitimate warfare to despoil them. Besides, we must have money. And how else can we get it under present conditions?"

"It is better to disband and await the time of another general uprising."

"Disband? Surrender and be thrown into the dungeons of Moro Castle? — Suffer myself to be choked to death by the infernal garrote? No; I prefer the death of a soldier."

"Only the leaders would be threatened with such a fate."

"Unfortunately, I am one of them," said Zorilla, sarcastically.

"But you could escape to Florida. A temporary exile —"

"How did you like your *own* exile?"

"A temporary exile, I repeat, is better than this hopeless game of hide-and-seek."

"And meanwhile the cause would languish more than ever. No, the few of us who still hold out in inaccessible retreats form a nucleus from which a future revolution may grow. We serve to keep alive the flame that otherwise would be smothered under the iron heel of oppression."

"I am convinced, on the contrary, that

you are damaging the cause," earnestly declared the man in the obscurity of the distant balcony. In the dim light his arm was seen to rise and fall in an involuntary gesture emphasizing his words. "How many men are now under your command?" he proceeded to ask.

"Ninety-three. Alvarez has nearly as many in the Isle of Pines. Marti has more than a hundred in the mountains of the eastern district, and there are two smaller bands about which I am not at present informed."

"Muy bien! You have ninety-three men. How many of these are of pure blood?"

"Twenty-five."

"How many are mulatto?"

"Twenty-eight."

"You have, then, forty negroes. Now, how many out of your whole band served as soldiers in the last revolution?"

"Seventeen besides myself."

"Ah! that proves my point. In your

band of ninety-three there are only eighteen men who can rightfully be called patriots, and the other seventy-five, what are they?"

"Whatever they are, they are devoted to the cause of Cuba."

"Ah, yes; it is convenient for them to be. Do you not see, Antonio, that instead of forming a nucleus for a future revolution, you are furnishing an asylum for runaways and escaped criminals, whose lawless acts are continually damaging the cause? Respectable sympathizers with the cause of freedom stand aghast at their atrocities, and are less and less likely to come forward. If you have the true interest of Cuba at heart, you will shake yourself loose from these outlaws; you will disband and wait."

"I have told you why I cannot disband," said Zorilla, stiffly; "you are all wrong. Should we follow your advice, the cause of free Cuba would be dead for fifty years."

"This is the year 1885. I predict that before ten years are passed this island will be in a state of revolt from one end to the other, and that Cuba will be free before the century is ended."

"God send it," cried Zorilla, solemnly.

There followed a short interval of silence.

Then — "What is the state of your finances?" the man called Don Ignacio asked out of the darkness.

"Very bad; something must be done very soon."

"Every true patriot is my heart's brother," was the solemn rejoinder, "and I would give my last doubloon to see Cuba free, but the time is past when I am willing to be even partly responsible for the holding together of a band of outlaws who commit highway robbery in the name of freedom."

"Don Ignacio!" cried the chief, starting to his feet in anger. "You alone can speak thus with impunity to Antonio

Zorilla. But for the respect I bear you, and —"

"Peace, peace," interrupted the other, wearily. "I did not include you and the few true men who may be with you in my denunciation. Let us proceed. I am growing cold and must soon go in. If you have other matters to speak of, let me hear them."

It may have been an hour later when Antonio Zorilla mounted his horse and rode down the avenue of palms. His manner was abstracted and he did not look about him with his usual watchfulness. It was partly due to this and partly to the shadow of a wide-spreading ceiba tree at the roadside near the foot of the avenue, that he failed to see the horseman watching his departure, — a horseman who till now had ridden back and forth with apparent aimlessness, his eyes fixed upon the light in an upper window of the residencia. At the approach of Zorilla, he

drew up in the shadow and waited, and after the night visitor to Buena Esperanza had passed on, he followed warily.

Zorilla made straight for San José, and soon after entering the town halted and dismounted before the Posada Aguila. The horseman who had followed now galloped up quickly and boldly, and was in time to see the chieftain's face in the light of the lamps.

"The face of a stranger, but I shall recollect it," was his thought as he passed on, presently taking the road to the Destierros plantation.

The Posada Aguila, or Eagle Inn, was a public house largely patronized by the peasantry, but caballeros as well as peasants were sometimes seen there, the place being known among the initiated as a rendezvous of the revolutionist element. Zorilla knew the landlord to be both friendly and discreet, but he judged it best to be careful, and before entering the wine room, he so arranged his broad-

brimmed hat that all but the lower part of his face was thrown into shadow. He seated himself at a vacant table near the door and ordered wine.

At the table nearest him sat three young men drinking and discussing a game of cards which they had just finished. The most striking figure of the three was Felipe Ocaña, the matador, he being distinguished by the physical robustness and perfection of the trained athlete. The other two were the handsome little gallant, Sebastiano Rios, and his friend Carlos.

In spite of his shadowed face and the subdued voice in which he gave his order, Zorilla was recognized. And by none other than Sebastiano, who had frequently seen the revolutionist captain during the last insurrection, the former being then a youth. The result, however, was nothing more than the following conversation, which Sebastiano cunningly brought about.

"Do you know, friend Felipe," he

began, "that a very rich man has come among us?"

"Ah? Who is it, then?"

"Don Arturo Glynn, whose father died at the Destierros."

"What! — *he* a rich man?" exclaimed Carlos, incredulously. "That is news. I have heard that Don Roger, his father, died embarrassed."

"True," said the smiling Sebastiano, "but it is said Don Arturo has inherited an immense fortune in America."

"Ah — so? Un heredero rico. That is fine."

"He is an American Crœsus. You have heard, it may be, how rich those Americans are. I have read in the papers of certain Señores Astor and Señores Vanderbilt who are rich enough to buy all Cuba, though that, indeed, is perhaps a lie. And now the Señor Glynn is almost as rich as these."

Zorilla had pricked up his ears and was listening intently.

"But what, then, is he doing here at the Destierros?"

"It is thought that he aspires to become one of our 'sugar noblemen.' A small portion of his riches poured into Spanish coffers would purchase the title of marqués. That would sound well in America, do you not see?"

"Muy bien. Good luck to his Cuban lordship," said Felipe Ocaña, heartily. "He will no doubt spend money on bulls and matadors."

"If I were Antonio Zorilla," proceeded Sebastiano, impressively, "I should make the acquaintance of the rich Señor Glynn. He can afford to stand a little bleeding.

"But they say Zorilla never meddles with anybody but rich and loyal Spaniards," put in Carlos, "and those Americanos are known to sympathize with the cause he represents."

"Ah, but this would-be marquis does not," declared Sebastiano, readily. "His sympathies are all with Spain, it is said.

It would be no surprise to hear that he had contributed money to the military fund. You see, free Cuba would mean a republic and the exit of marquises."

"The exit of bulls and matadors, too, perhaps," remarked Felipe Ocaña, showing no enthusiasm at the prospect of a free Cuba.

Zorilla drained his glass, rose, and went out, followed by the watchful glance of Sebastiano, who smiled with satisfaction.

"He swallowed it eagerly," was his thought, "and we may expect developments. When el capitan finds that I have uttered only fables, he may rid himself of his prisoner in the way that will cause the least inconvenience. If not, I may find other means."

Sebastiano Rios was the son of a well-to-do tradesman in San José, and had not been bred to that extremely delicate sense of personal honor which characterizes the Spanish and Cuban caballero. He did not, therefore, regard a personal encounter with

Arthur Glynn as necessary, the indignity put upon him by the latter not having become public. Besides, it was reasonable that he should fear the consequences. After mature reflection, he had decided not to challenge his enemy to combat, but to fight him secretly.

## X

### The Bait is Taken

TIME heals all wounds. The weariness and horror of life that seized upon Arthur Glynn on reading the letter that came to him from Buena Esperanza did not last. He was too young and of too buoyant a nature to long surrender himself to the deadly apathy of despair. After a few days his bowed spirit was again uplifted and he began hopefully to indite a letter. He wrote even a fuller expression of his love than he had uttered when face to face with Carita Ramirez in the latticed bower. He assured her of his perfect trust in spite of all the strangeness and suggestion of her surroundings, and he offered her the unchanging love of a loyal and devoted heart as a refuge from

the painful troubled mystery which appeared to hedge about her young life.

Had she told him that she loved another (he concluded), that would have ended all. She did *not* love another; he knew it, felt it, and there was no other obstacle that could remain between them permanently. The barriers now separating them would and must be removed in time; whatever they were, if only they involved no love for another man, they would gradually break away. Upon this hope he lived; in this hope he awaited that heaven of the future, resolved to endure till then the hard affliction of exile which she had been pleased to lay upon him.

Days passed, bringing no response whatever to this affecting appeal, but the hope that "springs eternal" never entirely deserted Arthur Glynn. As yet having suffered no great disappointment or failure in life, he could not wholly believe that such a stern fate might now await him.

Although he daily longed to stand again within the hallowed precincts of the latticed bower, he sternly resisted his desires. But occasionally of an evening he took the road to Buena Esperanza and slowly passed and repassed the foot of the avenue of palms, his eyes fixed absently upon the lights of the residencia while he inwardly visioned the rare, the radiant, the sweet saint who dwelt there. It was thus that he once encountered Zorilla, and seeing him to be comparatively young and in his own way handsome, poor Arthur began to be tortured with new anxieties and moments of a lover's mad jealousy.

At the Destierros, notwithstanding his preoccupation and suffering, he now soon assumed the reins of government with a firm hand and went energetically about his affairs, preparing for the coming season of ceaseless activity that began with December. No one but his mother knew that he was dissatisfied. Toward Miss Ray his manner was polite and cous-

inly, but not devoted. He drove her out and made efforts to please her, but she saw that he had not succumbed to her charms, and, out of the narrowness and selfhood of a small mind, disliked him accordingly. She drew constant comparisons, to his discredit, between his sincere and direct manner and the flattering speeches and grand hidalgo airs and graces of Don Alfredo. There was infinitesimal likelihood, therefore, that the plans of Roger Glynn would ever be seen in their fruition.

Within a week after Zorilla's appearance at the Posada Aguila an event occurred which startled the family at the Destierros. Arthur Glynn and Willis, his negro overseer, had spent the afternoon at San José on business connected with the purchase of supplies for the plantation, and started homeward at sunset. As they trotted over the loneliest part of the road in the gathering night, the negro talking loudly and cheerfully of

the affairs at home, Arthur was suddenly conscious of a stinging, tearing pain in his left arm and at the same instant heard the report of a revolver close at hand. Turning in the saddle and reining his horse, he looked back in time to see the faint outlines of the head and shoulders of a man subsiding behind the hedge of Spanish bayonet on his left. Like every one else, Arthur went armed when riding in the country, not to do so being regarded as the height of imprudence. He now quickly drew a pistol and fired into the hedge, regardless of the negro's cry: —

"Robbers! robbers! We got to git up and git!"

The report of his revolver was lost in a much greater volume of sound. A volley of not less than three or four firearms was discharged from behind the hedge and the bullets whistled about the two exposed horsemen, leaving them untouched through a wonder of good fortune.

"Come on! or dey'll sho' git us!" cried

the terrified Willis, seizing hold of his reluctant master's bridle and driving his spurs against the flanks of his own beast. Then as they sped forward out of reach: "In de name o' goodness, boss, did you aim to stop dere and fight a whole passel o' robbers? You don' know dese Cuban robbers. Dey don' do to fool wid."

"Scoundrels! If I could only have seen one of them!" was the fierce rejoinder.

A great sensation followed their arrival at the residencia. Arthur appeared pale from excitement, and with the blood running in a stream down his left wrist. His mother rose to meet him with a cry of alarm, but composed herself and promptly attended to his wants. With the assistance of Willis, she stripped him to the waist, and was overjoyed to find only a flesh wound in the left forearm, the bullet having passed in and out without serious result, as eventually appeared, although the bleeding was for some time copious, exciting fears that some important vein had

been severed. A vessel containing water was held by Willis and a cold stream poured over the wound during some minutes, with the result that the bleeding gradually slackened, until they were able to wrap the arm in bandages saturated with healing ointment. All this before the surgeon hastily sent for had even arrived.

"It is very strange, very strange," repeated Mrs. Glynn, as her son lay quietly on a lounge in her sitting-room that night. "It could hardly have been Zorilla's men, for they are said to attack rarely and only in order to plunder some rich and loyal planter. And I have never heard of ordinary footpads so near San José."

"They were certainly bandits of some sort," said Arthur, coolly. "I have no personal enemies, except little Sebastiano Rios, and he would hardly resort to this, I think."

In response to inquiry, he told the story of his summary disposal of Rios in the

church, his mother laughing and looking at him proudly as she listened. He spoke of Carita Ramirez only as "a lady."

"Do you know who she was?" asked Mrs. Glynn, suddenly grown serious, and now Arthur regretted he had spoken.

"One of the ladies living at Buena Esperanza," he answered, with evident hesitancy.

"The younger one?"

"Yes."

"O Arthur, I know now what has been the matter with you," said his mother, with solemn, lowered voice. "That — that woman has fascinated you!"

"Well, is she to blame for that?" he asked almost rudely, resenting her tone, and willing to confess his love in his overpowering desire to defend. "She did not seek it, and now that she knows it, she will not even see me."

"Ah, yes, that is because she prefers Zorilla. I have heard how the bandit Zorilla is the only visitor allowed at that house."

"She is an angel of heaven!" was the passionate cry of the tortured lover.

"Angels have fallen before her time," was the pitiless suggestion that followed.

And so poor Arthur, from a state of tranquillity, passed to one of intense agitation. His mother had forgotten his wound in a greater anxiety, and thought not of the wretched, wakeful night, or of the fever with his wound throughout the morrow which would result from this conversation. At the expiration of ten days, however, his wound had entirely healed and long before that time he began to go about his affairs as usual.

The attempted robbery or assassination was promptly reported to the guardia civil, but such efforts as were made to discover the whereabouts and nature of the attacking party apparently proved fruitless. The powerlessness of the authorities to suppress these highwaymen was shown by the fact that, within three weeks of the first, a second attack was made on Arthur

Glynn, scarcely two miles distant from San José.

Riding homeward alone somewhat later in the evening than before, he became absorbed in thought and scarcely noted a cavalier of doubtful appearance who galloped up from behind him and with a perfunctory "Buenas tardes!" clattered onward out of sight in the dusk. Had Arthur still retained the watchfulness of manner that characterized him for several days after he began to go abroad again, he might now have observed that the passing horseman resembled a man he had seen twice that afternoon in the town, and once under such circumstances as to suggest that he was the agent in a system of espionage of which he himself was the object.

Riding forward, Arthur thought of nothing but his apparently hopeless love, with now and then a diverted moment of contemplation devoted to the always wonderful cocuyo insect which was filling the early

night with a thousand floating stars. The Cuban fire-fly is triple the size of the American and infinitely more brilliant, so brilliant indeed that, as Arthur well remembered, the negroes of the Destierros were wont to confine large numbers of them in tiny wicker cages, thus securing sufficient light for ordinary purposes in their barracoons at night.

Moving forward thus, as it were through a shower of stars, Arthur Glynn suddenly resumed his watchful air with a start on seeing the indistinct outlines of two men squatting against the hedge, their presence revealed in the flash of the cocuyos' torches. His right hand had barely touched the pistol in his belt when he heard the whispered command to fire. An instant later a sheet of flame leaped out from the hedge and the roar of several firearms simultaneously discharged was heard. The rider was left unharmed, — evidently a part of the plan of the ambuscade, — but the horse, after one forward

plunge, fell dead, pierced by some half a dozen bullets.

Arthur found himself thrown violently to the ground and was unable to spring to his feet, one leg being pinned down by the body of the horse. But his pistol was in his hand, and without pausing to reflect he fired as several dark forms leaped toward him brandishing swords and broad-bladed machetes.

One of these staggered, fell prostrate over the legs of the horse, and did not rise again. Before he could fire a second shot the defenceless man was overpowered. The pistol being wrenched from his grasp, he was securely bound and dragged a few yards along the road to a clump of hedge trees, where several horses were in waiting.

Arthur was at first dumb with astonishment, having expected to be either robbed or murdered; but as he was rudely lifted upon the back of a horse, he burst out fiercely in a demand to know what was to be done with him. No answer being

made, the captive was left to uncertain and wild conjectures as his kidnappers rode swiftly away with him in the night.

There was anxiety at the Destierros that evening when the time for Arthur's return had overpassed. There was consternation the next morning when Willis reported that his horse was lying dead on the road, pierced with bullets, and with a letter thrust between his teeth addressed to "los amigos del Señor Don Arturo Glynn." At a very early hour the black man returned to the house with this letter and the bridle and saddle taken from the dead horse. The former was found to be a formal notice to the friends of Don Arthur that he had been kidnapped and would be held for ransom.

After naming an enormous sum as necessary to redeem the captive, the notice set forth that if the money should be sent on a certain day to a certain spot near a village in the neighboring mountains, through the medium of a discreet and

unarmed messenger, the captive would be promptly liberated. It was further stated that the whole neighborhood would be watched on the day appointed and any meditated treachery would be promptly detected and sternly dealt with. The letter concluded with the startling statement that if the government were appealed to and troops sent against those now in charge of the prisoner, the life of the latter was from that moment sacrificed.

As all this was read aloud in translation by Mrs. Glynn, assisted by little Phil, who read Spanish better than English, cries of horror and grief were uttered by Miss Ray, the boy, and the black man; but the mother shed no tear nor uttered a sob, though all the blood in her veins rushed toward her heart. With a face of marble she arose and despatched swift messengers to Padre Serrano and Don Alfredo Rodriguez, waiting then with enforced composure till fleet horses had

brought these two friends to the Destierros, one immediately after the other.

Then a council was held in the salon, only these two gentlemen, the tearful Miss Ray, and the dry-eyed mother being present. All looked at the Padre as if expecting some immediate and fruitful suggestion from him.

"Do you think the threat forbidding an appeal to the military would in that event be carried out?" asked Mrs. Glynn, in Spanish, a little hoarsely but quietly.

"Undoubtedly," answered Padre Serrano.

"Undoubtedly," echoed Don Alfredo. "They are desperate men, these bandoleros."

"Then," was the husky rejoinder, the mother's face a shade paler, "they demand what is impossible. The ransom cannot be paid, not even if I sell the Destierros. What then?"

"Will they dare to kill him?" cried Miss Mabel Ray, bursting into sobs.

"Oh, if I only had a true friend, my cousin would be rescued!" Now that fear, generous affection, the milk of human kindness, were stirred to activity within her, this young lady forgot everything, even Arthur's failure to flatter her vanity, and she would right gladly have seen her devoted Don Alfredo run even a fearful risk for the sake of her indifferent cousin.

"Rest assured, madam," promptly responded the former, with an agitated countenance, "that all that man can do will be done. But we must move cautiously," he added, turning to the others. "We might send a messenger and treat for a lower ransom," he suggested, with some hesitation.

"What do you advise, Padre?" asked the mother, feverishly.

"I advise you to do nothing," was the answer, and all stared at the priest in wonder. "Make no appeal to the government at Havana," he continued; "do not inform the guardia civil. Wait. For

the present leave the matter to me. The name of the village where the ransom is to be paid convinces me that Arthur is in the hands of Zorilla's men. Now I know a person who has great influence with Zorilla, and I think that through him I can obtain your son's release. At any rate, it is worth the effort. Meanwhile any appeal to the authorities will only anger Zorilla and lessen our chances."

"But who —" began Mrs. Glynn.

"Do not ask me, I beg, but trust me and wait. If you agree to my proposal, I shall set about the affair this instant."

"Then — we will wait," was the mother's half-reluctant decision, delivered in a voice that was shaken with suppressed sobs. "We came to Cuba," was her thought, "to escape from anticipated insufferable evils in the Southern States. Could anything we left behind be worse than this? We had better have stayed in America. God speed you, Padre," she said aloud, as the priest hurriedly took his leave.

"If his plan fail," said Don Alfredo when alone with Miss Ray a few moments later, "mine will not. I, too, have a plan," he said, ardently.

"At least I shall learn if there be a man who loves me," the lady answered with a lofty indifferent air which made him the more firmly resolved to make great sacrifices, even of a pecuniary sort, rather than lose favor at her court. It is said that love laughs at locksmiths; his contempt for the most tightly drawn purse-strings is no whit less serene.

Meanwhile Padre Serrano was riding hard and alone on the road to Buena Esperanza.

## XI

### Little Phil's Adventure

VERY early on the following morning the black man Willis was astir. Woe had fallen upon the Destierros; the young master was in captivity and death hung over him, but nevertheless the work must go on. Back and forth between the barracoons and the fields rode Willis, directing and urging, now and again expostulating, and enforcing his commands with threats of what el amo would do if the business in hand were not promptly and faithfully executed. The American negro's position at his employer's right hand was long since established and even the hired white laborers were wont to listen to him respectfully, though he was as much hated by some of them as he was feared by not a few blacks and coolies.

The overseer had seen the work for the day well started and was on his way toward the house to receive his mistress' commands when he observed little Phil riding toward him at a full gallop. The boy was dressed in his ordinary clothes, but what struck Willis with astonishment was the huge leathern belt buckled round his waist, in which were thrust a gleaming machete and two formidable-looking pistols. The youngster rode straight to meet the black man, and both halted when within a few feet of each other.

"Look like you gwine off to jine de army," remarked Willis, interrogatingly. "Where you git dem pistols?"

"I took 'em," was the laconic response. "I'm goin' to find Arthur," the boy added mysteriously.

"Look yuh, Phil, is you gone crazy dis mornin'? What in de name o' common sense! Always look like to me you had good sense till dis minute!" Willis paused for want of adequate words.

"I want you to go with me," continued little Phil, ignoring the negro's irreverent comment.

"Who — *me?*"

"If you won't, then I'm goin' by myself."

"You want dem robbers to carve you into mince-meat, boy?"

"Zorilla won't let them hurt me. *He* knows me."

"Go 'way from yuh and quit yo' foolin', boy!" cried Willis with a loud guffaw.

"Yes, he does," asserted little Phil, earnestly. "He knows me and he likes me, too."

"Well ef dat don' beat all! Did you sleep in de moonlight las' night?" asked the negro, curiously. "'Cause sump'n is sho' addled yo' brains."

"Well, are you goin' or not?" demanded the boy, angrily, disdaining to prove his assertion.

"Who, me? No-suh-ree! No use fo' me to gie Zorilla a chance to tan my

hide all for nuthin'. My business is to stay right yuh an' look atter dis place tell de Padre see what he kin do. Dat what yo' ma say to me yistiddy evenin'."

"Muy bien," said the boy in evident disgust, and, putting spurs to his horse, he galloped on.

"You better go back to dat house and put up dem pistols," Willis called after him. "I gwine right straight and tell yo' ma."

This threat produced absolutely no effect, and the little cavalier was soon beyond hearing. Willis rode quietly toward the residencia, concluding after a few moments' reflection to say nothing to his mistress, who suffered from too many afflictions already. With regard to his own anxieties, the black man consoled himself with the reasonable conjecture that the boy would have enough of the proposed expedition and return home of his own accord after a ride of three or four miles.

But it was far from likely that the boy

would be satisfied with so little. The hazardous expedition had been seriously undertaken, and little Phil was really hopeful of success. His determination to attempt it resulted in part from his belief in Zorilla's friendship for himself, in part from native cleverness and courage, and finally from the effects of exciting reading. In the feuilleton of a Cuban newspaper that came regularly to the Destierros he had read a series of blood-curdling tales that put to shame the tamer records of the American "nickel libraries" and the English penny dreadfuls. Filled with the deceptive ardors of callow youth, he thought none so happy as he who went forth to battle by sea and land, who daily gave and received sword thrusts in mortal combat, who cut pirates' throats and languished in robbers' caves, and who, through miracles of chance, returned whole of limb in the end with only a few honorable scars and bruises in evidence of his mighty adventures. Underlying all this was now,

of course, an intense desire on the part of little Phil to secure his brother's safety.

Crossing the plantation, the boy galloped along a lane between two neighboring estates. He then took the road leading toward the mountains through a long stretch of thinly settled country covered for the most part with cedar, ebony, mahogany, and other timber in its primitive state. Here and there a small farmer's modest palm-thatched hut, shaded by a few palms and banana trees, would be seen in a clearing of a few acres devoted to the growth of tobacco, yams, and a variety of fruits; but the large sugar and coffee estates were now left behind.

The morning was fine. The luxuriant vegetation rioted in the warm, intense sunshine. Bright-colored birds flew up on every hand, now with a sweet or merry chirp, now with a harsh croak or scream. Gorgeous lizards and chameleons darted into the hedges of aloe and wild pine. The air was full of the fragrance of in-

numerable flowering plants and climbing vines; for, although it was now autumn, this country of perpetual bloom still wore the smile of spring. The cheerfulness of the sun-kissed landscape inspired the little knight-errant with renewed courage and hope.

About an hour after leaving home, meanwhile having made good speed, the boy perceived a horseman travelling steadily forward on the road ahead of him, apparently bent on a journey to the mountains. Already on the lookout for Zorilla's men, little Phil eyed him warily from afar. There were pistols in the holster of his saddle and a Toledo blade hung at his side, but the shirt hanging outside his trousers and his whole manner indicated either a robber in disguise or a harmless peasant farmer.

After some hesitation the boy ventured to overtake and accost the traveller.

"Holà, Pablo!" he presently exclaimed, relieved to see a familiar face.

It was indeed the nut-brown little man from Buena Esperanza riding forth upon his own dear steed (Pablo inherited the love of his remote Moorish ancestors for a horse), with his own sharp sword of Toledo, his glistening silver spurs, and with an unusually solemn and important air. He showed great surprise, but saluted the boy with grave dignity.

"What does little master Felipe here?" he asked in the peasant dialect, with which the boy was familiar.

"I am going to Zorilla's camp. Where are you going?"

"I? I am on my way to — El Monte," Pablo answered with hesitation, mentioning the name of the village where the ransom was to be paid.

"Then may I ride with you as far as that?" asked little Phil, eagerly. "Eh, Pablo, mi amigo?"

Pablo fixed his little black eyes intently on the boy as he answered: "With pleasure, little master, if such is your

will; but wherefore go you to Zorilla's camp?"

"To find my brother. Have you not heard that he has been taken prisoner?"

"Ah, yes. And — and have you the money for the ransom?" asked the little man, more and more astonished.

"I? Nobody has as much money as that!"

"You go without the *money?*" Pablo stopped short and the boy likewise drew rein. "And does the Señora, your mother, know of this?"

"No, I knew better than to tell her."

"Go back, little master," urged Pablo, anxiously. "You do not know what danger you go into. The Señora, your mother, has sorrow enough this day."

"I'm not afraid," declared little Phil, confidently. "Zorilla is my friend."

"Are you mad, little master? What is all this?"

"Do you see this purse? Zorilla gave it to me himself with four doubloons in it

in gold and silver." The boy held up triumphantly before the astonished yeoman's eyes a silken purse on which was plainly embroidered the name "Antonio Zorilla."

"Santa Maria! it is true," gasped Pablo. "But how—"

"One day in the cockpit at San José, I won a bet from a Chinese beggar," explained little Phil, "and he looked so miserable and broken-hearted that I was sorry for him and gave the money back to him. Then a man took me by the arm and led me out of the crowd, and he looked at me as if he liked me very much. And he said, 'You are a fine little man, and you shall have more than you gave back to that coolie;' and then he gave me this purse and before I could thank him or say a word, off he went into the crowd again. I didn't see him again, but when I found the name on the purse I knew that it was the famous Zorilla in disguise. I didn't tell them about it at

home," the boy added frankly, "because I didn't want them to know I had been to the cockpit. But I have kept the purse and every centimo of the money."

"And you will tell Don Antonio —"

"I will give him back his purse," cried the boy, with a flushed cheek and a dancing eye, "and ask for my brother in exchange!"

"It is wonderful," mused Pablo, looking at little Phil with undisguised admiration. "Indeed, this brave boy is not so mad after all. His plan may serve, should my master's fail. At all events, he will not be harmed with that purse in his hand, and I run no additional risk in taking him with me."

"Now will you let me go with you to El Monte?" asked the youngster, with a confident smile.

"Ay, little master, and to the camp of Capitan Zorilla, too, for I am bound thither. We will go there together, and may the good God send us safe home again."

And so they rode forward, little Phil chatting hopefully and Pablo listening and saying little. The latter's manner was uniformly kind and friendly, but he remained to the last resolutely uncommunicative. All the clever lad's questions were skilfully evaded and he learned absolutely nothing concerning the object of his companion's mission to Zorilla's camp.

At noon they reached the village of El Monte, a straggling double row of peasants' huts of stone and sun-dried bricks in the foot-hills of a bold range of mountains. Brown women in high-colored bandanas and red mantillas stood about the doors, in the midst of slatternly, half-clothed family groups,—the children under ten years, indeed, quite naked. An occasional horseman of doubtful appearance rode in and out of the settlement, and rough-looking gitano-like men and boys, the former armed to the teeth, sauntered aimlessly along the single street winding up hill and down dale.

All these stared curiously, sometimes, it seemed, suspiciously, at Pablo and little Phil, but in all cases saluted them with a grave and stately courtesy of manner that would have become a king. Halting at a little casa de posada, the travellers refreshed themselves with a bountiful breakfast of sausages and garlic, fried bananas, blood-colored rice, casava bread, aguardiente, and coffee. Little Phil ate quickly and begged that they might push on without delay; but the more deliberate Pablo insisted on a halt of an hour, during which time he ate and drank copiously, and smoked no less than three cigars. Finally, they mounted and pursued their journey without question or molestation from the armed loiterers about the village, who, however, marked their going as well as their coming in a watchful manner.

The ground soon began to rise precipitately before them, and the afternoon was spent in toiling up steep slopes, crossing shallow, roaring mountain torrents full of

huge, slippery stones, and in picking the way along dangerous pathways over narrow, rocky ledges which hung above yawning ravines. No sooner had they left the village a good five miles behind them, than they began to encounter here and there an armed man, either on horseback or afoot, who promptly challenged them and allowed them to proceed only after Pablo had shown a letter with Zorilla's name on it, and uttered a few words of explanation in a tone usually too low for even little Phil's quick ear. Once or twice, however, the boy distinguished the word "mensajero" (messenger). Two or three of these men, who were evidently on sentinel or scouting duty, were, toward the last, encountered in the course of every mile. They were nearly all mulattoes or negroes of forbidding aspect, the former especially being a low-browed, bloodthirsty looking lot.

At five o'clock in the afternoon, in the remote fastnesses of the sierras, at what

appeared to be an outpost of Zorilla's camp, they were ordered to stop and were not allowed to proceed until nightfall, a guide being then furnished them. After some two hours more of slow and tedious travel through rocky defiles and stretches of gloomy forest, they emerged upon a comparatively level and open space, surrounded by high, bare rocks, where fires burned and several white tents gleamed in the starlight. The number of men — whites, mulattoes, and negroes — collected here about the fires and posted as sentinels appeared to be considerable.

After some little delay the visitors were conducted into one of the larger tents, which was furnished with a light, movable bed, a table for writing, camp-chairs, and palm-leaf mats. A man of powerful build, with a face of strong and bold outlines, sat writing at the table, and as soon as he looked up little Phil recognized the owner of the silken purse.

"Ah, it is you, Pablo?" said Zorilla,

facing them. "What brings you here? But—this boy?" he ejaculated, seeing little Phil.

"He is the brother of the Señor Glynn," stammered Pablo, all of a tremble.

"And with you? What does this mean?" the chief demanded, with a piercing look directed at the boy.

"I fell in with him on the road. He was bound thither of his own motion and could not be persuaded to turn back."

"He does not bring the ransom then?"

"No, comandante. He—"

"Why then is he here?" interrupted Zorilla, annoyed and angry.

"Do you not remember me, Captain Zorilla?" asked little Phil, pale with excitement, but taking two steps forward and speaking out bravely. "I am the boy to whom you gave this purse in the cockpit at San José last spring."

"I remember you perfectly," said the chief after a moment, but knitting his brows as if puzzled. "And you are the

brother — I supposed you were a Cuban."

"I am Cuban born, Señor. My mother is American, but she has lived here twenty years."

"And yet you are the brother of this American Don?"

"It is quite true, comandante," spoke up Pablo, eagerly. "The Señor Glynn himself came to Cuba as a child."

"There is a misunderstanding," said Zorilla, still puzzled. "But what are you here for, my lad?" he asked.

"To give you back your purse, — the four doubloons are still in it, — and to ask for my brother in exchange," answered the boy, with a trembling lip but an undaunted eye.

It was clear that the lawless chief was much moved. He threw back his head with a snort, and his beak-like nose was thrown into bolder outline. He darted a piercing glance at Pablo and then looked back at the trembling boy; and

when he spoke his changed tone indicated suppressed feeling. He mechanically took the purse that was held out to him, and was evidently doubtful what to do with it. At last, after a pause that was one of painful suspense to Pablo as well as to little Phil, he said: —

"You have done a brave and manly thing, my boy. The heart of a soldier is born in you. Cuba needs all her brave sons; God send the day when you will fight for her freedom. My heart moves me to grant the wish of so fine a lad, but" — and Zorilla hesitated, toying with the silken purse — "present needs must be considered, and they are pressing, and — such as you cannot understand."

Again he stopped, evidently undecided, looking absently at the purse in his hand and then back at the pleading face of the boy. All at once he burst into a laugh, and the expression of his face hardened.

"But this, — this handful, is not a slave boy's ransom," he said, shaking the purse

so that the chink of the gold and silver was heard.

"It is all I have," said little Phil, huskily, his face the picture of despair.

"Holà, there, Manuel!" cried Zorilla suddenly, calling to a sentinel just outside the door. "Take this boy to Guzman's tent and say that he is to be treated with every consideration. I will speak with you again," he said, dismissing little Phil. "Now, Pablo, your business?"

And, as the bewildered boy was led away, he looked back and saw his travelling companion deliver two letters into Zorilla's hands.

## XII

### The Bandoleros

AFTER an hour's rapid ride, Arthur Glynn was no longer able to recognize his whereabouts or to determine the direction his kidnappers were taking. He soon saw, however, that they were entering the mountainous district and knew that they had penetrated to the remotest and most inaccessible fastnesses of the neighboring sierras, when, in the still hours after midnight, they emerged upon an open space among rocky heights and halted within call of several tents that gleamed white and ghostly in the starlight. After challenges, answers, whispered consultations, involving fully a quarter of an hour's delay, he was ordered to leap from his horse and

follow several men, who left the tents to their left and approached a wall of rock some two hundred yards distant.

As he had expected, these conducted him into a cavern, set a guard at the opening, and, unbinding his arms, left him to himself, after placing food on a small rude table, which, together with a camp-chair and a bed of dark blankets spread upon rush mats, formed the furniture of the place. The cavern was small and was suffused throughout with a dim, curious light, the nature of which was not immediately apparent, and with reference to which the prisoner was too weary to care to inform himself. It was sufficient to know that he was cut off from all escape (he took that for granted), and having eaten, he threw his weary body on the bed and fell into heavy slumber.

When he awoke it was morning and his watch indicated the hour of nine. The entrance of a man bringing his coffee had aroused him. Light penetrated through

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the opening as far as the remotest corners of the cave, and he now observed that its dimensions were not more than fifty by about thirty feet, the depth from floor to roof varying from fifteen to twenty-five feet. It was nothing more than a depression or hollow in the side of the wall of rock, with a tunnel-like entrance some twenty feet in length. He observed also that the light of the previous night had been furnished by large numbers of cocuyos, these immense fire-flies being confined in little wicker cages which hung in festoons along the walls.

Arthur would have conjectured that he was in Zorilla's hands even if he had not heard that name whispered several times after his arrival on the night before. His first act after drinking his coffee, therefore, was to approach the sentinels at the entrance of the cave and ask for an interview with the chief. The prompt answer to this request, and when made again several times later, was monotonously the same :—

"Usted no puede ver el capitan."

Demanding vehemently to know wherefore he was not allowed to see the chief, he was answered only by a shrug. Walking as far out into the tunnel-like entrance as the position of the sentinels would permit, Arthur attempted in vain to obtain a view of the camp. The tunnel ended within a few feet of a jutting perpendicular mass of rock that cut off even the view of the sky. The rays of the sun, as the day advanced, fell upon this with a blinding glare, radiating strong reflected light back into the cave.

There were two sentinels, one on either side of the passage, armed with Minié rifles. They sat on low ledges of rock facing each other, and when the prisoner was not near spoke occasionally to each other in low tones. One was a mulatto, the other a negro, and both were men of the most forbidding aspect, suggesting fierce watch-dogs rather than sentinels. One of the latter's cheeks was

seamed by an old sword cut of a dirty livid hue, startlingly in contrast with the rest of his face. The mulatto had lost an eye as well as three fingers of his right hand, and his expression was one of unusual ferocity.

"A fine country this! — where an honest man can be dragged from his home and penned up in a hole by such dogs as these!" muttered the prisoner, in furious scorn and disgust.

Judging from these, Zorilla's men must truly be an ill-favored and beastly lot, in spirit if not in name nothing but common brigands composed of the worst elements of society. What hope was there for a free Cuba as long as the atrocities of runaway slaves and escaped criminals should pass under the name of legitimate revolt? If the true patriots of Cuba suffered it, they were responsible for the hopelessness of their cause. As did his father before him, Arthur felt a warm sympathy for the insurgents of '68–'76 in their struggle against oppression; but it may not be

wondered at that he should now begin to doubt whether struggling Cuba deserved to be free, and, if once free, whether there were manliness and bravery and wisdom enough among her sons to maintain for her a place among the nations of the earth. Spain had, indeed, failed to keep her promises of concessions, the land groaned under the iniquitous exactions of the tax-gatherer and the unjust distinctions recognized by the government between the resident Spaniard and the native Cuban; but the hearts of honest patriots had failed, they had succumbed to the inevitable, and their cause was trampled in the dust, being now merely a cloak for bandoleros pure and simple whom justice should sweep from the face of the earth. So reasoned Arthur in his helplessness and anger, and so reasoned many others with less interest at stake. And yet Zorilla really believed that he was serving the cause of his country, and was only too careless of the means in his zeal for the end.

The day wore away drearily, the prisoner waiting to know his fate in a fever of impatience and anxiety that was difficult to endure. Philosophy, the unfailing refuge of the unfortunate, serves little during the period of suspense. Every inquiry addressed to his jailers was alike in result. He could not see Zorilla, and they would carry no messages for him; he was to remain where he was, awaiting the pleasure of the chief, and if he attempted violence he might know what to expect. As he paced frantically back and forth, like a chafing lion, his guard watched him with evident pleasure, leering and whispering. To the eyes of the infuriated young man, the negro's appearance took on the suggestion of a grinning hyena, the mulatto's of a skulking wolf; he would have been glad to spring upon them and strangle them, but checked himself, knowing that any attempt at violence would be madness.

When his dinner was brought by the same harmless montero whose entrance

had awakened him that morning, and who probably served as a cook in the camp, Arthur began to ask him questions in a low voice. Where was Zorilla? What was the meaning of this suspense? Was he to be murdered or held for ransom?

"I am told to say nothing, Señor," was the only answer.

"You can at least tell me," Arthur proceeded, after an effort to control his anger, "whether the man I shot down when I was taken is still alive?"

"He is dead, Señor."

The prisoner was afterward conscious that he enjoyed a moment of savage satisfaction and delight at the thought that he had weakened his enemies to the extent of at least one man.

"Did they leave him lying on the road?" he asked.

"No, Señor; he was carried to El Monte and died there this morning, I am told."

The montero now hastily retired. Soon

afterward darkness filled the cave, and soft light was radiated from the festooned cages of cocuyos, which served as so many Chinese lanterns.

Wearied by the violence of his emotions and the oppression of a thousand anxieties, Arthur early sought his couch, where the sleep of exhaustion shortly overtook him.

The second day was a repetition of the first. The grinning hyena and the leering wolf were the prisoner's only company, and the monotony of the day was broken only by the coming of the montero with coffee in the early morning and a basket of food and wine at noon and at sunset. The daylight crept up and broadened on the rocky wall outside the tunnel until the glare of midday was reflected in the farthest corners of the cave, then slowly waned, faded into shadow, and night had come again.

At nine o'clock Arthur Glynn lay tossing on his couch, unable to sleep. Sud-

denly starting up in a frenzy, he rushed upon the sentinels, who, as they observed his rapid movements, promptly covered him with their rifles.

"Once more I demand to see Zorilla," he thundered.

"Usted no puede," said the wolf, with a chuckle.

"No es permiso," said the hyena, with a grin.

"I am here, Señor Glynn," came the voice of Zorilla from the mouth of the tunnel.

The two guards bounded to their feet and saluted their chief, who was indeed at hand. As Zorilla advanced into the light, Arthur saw with pain and rage that he was none other than the night visitor to Buena Esperanza whose face he had seen in the entrance of the Eagle Inn at San José.

"Are you Señor Zorilla, the bandit chief?" asked the young man, icily.

"I am Zorilla, the *patriot* chief," was the answer, with a stately bow.

"We will not discuss patriotism, if you please; our opinions, no doubt, differ," was the rejoinder. "But I should like to ask what are your intentions in regard to your prisoner?"

"To set you at liberty."

Arthur Glynn looked in silence at the maker of this incredible announcement, as if wondering if the further indignity of a jest were now hurled at him. He had been kidnapped in order to be set at liberty!

"I have been misled, Señor, and have now come to offer you your freedom and my apologies," said Antonio Zorilla, with a grave dignity and a certain nobility of manner that still further astonished the prisoner. "Just now you called me a bandit, but having offered you your liberty without robbing you, I may venture to assure you that I am no bandolero of the common type. I rob only the rich and only those rich who are the enemies of Cuba's cause. With regard to you, I

was led to believe that you were the friend of Spain and gave money to establish her dominion; furthermore, that you were immensely rich and were about to purchase a title of nobility."

"How could you have heard these incredible things?" gasped Arthur, in doubt.

"I admit that I too readily accepted them as facts," said Zorilla, in a tone of unquestionable sincerity and regret. "I heard all this in an inn at San José, and, little dreaming that it was idle gossip, I caused you to be abducted and the price of your ransom to be published. But I am now reliably informed that what was said of you is untrue in every particular. It only remains, therefore, Señor," Zorilla concluded, with the utmost courtesy of manner, "for me to undo the evil and beg you to accept my apologies."

"And I in return," said Arthur, heartily, his anger gone and his respect won, "can only express my perfect willingness to forgive the evil, since you voluntarily

make the only amends in your power. Let me add that, to speak candidly, I cannot approve of the position you hold years after the insurrection has been formally suppressed, but I am compelled to recognize in you the true instincts of a gentleman."

"Gracias," murmured Zorilla, with the bow of a hidalgo. "And now, Señor, you are at liberty to go at once. One of my best horses awaits you to replace your own, which was shot."

"Ah, that reminds me that I had the misfortune to kill one of your men," said Arthur, showing in voice and manner the regret that he felt without blaming himself for a just act.

"I have none to spare," said Zorilla, gravely, "but the loss of a man here and there is a part of the game. It is the fortune of war. You were right to kill him and as many more as you could."

"You truly make amends, Señor," said Arthur, moved by this generous speech.

"Your horse is ready," the chief continued. "A guard will conduct you as far as El Monte, whence you can proceed tomorrow without molestation. Your little brother is here and will go with you."

"*My* brother? — Philip?"

"Yes, brave little Felipe," was the answer, and as he spoke a smile smoothed out the stern lines in Zorilla's face. He then quietly told the story of the boy's arrival but an hour since, not omitting to mention the cockpit incident of the previous spring.

"Dear, brave boy," murmured Arthur, his eyes glistening. "Then it was from him you learned that my vast riches, etc., were myths?"

"No, I learned it independently. But even if I had remained in ignorance, I do not think I could have resisted the appeal of that little soldier."

Zorilla now blew a whistle and almost immediately a white man appeared, a sword at his side and a rifle in his hand. "Con-

duct the Señor to his horse," was the brief order.

Arthur put out his hand and the other grasped it warmly, saying: —

"A Dios, Señor. If you live to see the flame that will sweep over Cuba and drive her oppressors from their last foothold, remember that it was Zorilla's aim to keep alive the spark from which that flame will spread."

The soldier who had been summoned brought a lantern, and in the stronger light of this Arthur took note of a folded letter which the chief held in his left hand. The words "imploro" and "libertar" caught his eye; but it was not the suggestiveness of these, it was the handwriting itself that fixed his attention. His heart sank within him as he recognized the same delicate chirography once seen on the sheet of paper in the latticed bower at Buena Esperanza.

"She bids me keep away and writes to *him*," was his maddening thought.

## XIII

### From Scylla to Charybdis

OUT of the gloom of the cave and the nightmare of the past forty-eight hours, Arthur emerged into the clear starlight and mounted the waiting horse. Freedom was before him, but his heart was like lead. What was freedom, if she loved Zorilla? The soldier with the lantern took the bridle and led the horse some two hundred yards beyond the spot where the tents were pitched. Here the half-absent rider perceived a group of four horsemen awaiting him. The smallest of these rode forward, and the glad voice of little Phil was heard asking: —

"Is that you, Arthur? I *knew* Captain Zorilla would let you go."

For a moment the two brothers' hands

were clasped, then the order to move forward was given, and the little party set out.

Shortly after midnight the five horsemen reached the village of El Monte. Three of them then turned back, while the other two dismounted and entered the little casa de posada.

"Look here!" cried little Phil, who had emptied the silken purse on the table as soon as he was alone with his brother in the apartment allotted to them. "There are eight doubloons here now. Zorilla put in four more. I *thought* it felt heavier when he gave it back to me."

"And yet I have heard that he is in desperate need of money," said Arthur. "How absolutely Spanish!"

"Isn't he good?" cried the boy, enthusiastically. "I don't care if he is a bandit, he's good!"

"There is honor even among—bandits."

"It was lucky I had this purse and

kept it, wasn't it?" said the boy, proudly holding the precious object up before his shining eyes. "If I hadn't, you might still be in Zorilla's cave."

"Yes, Felipe mio," said Arthur, affectionately, and sighed. "More powerful influences than your purse, brave boy, were concerned in my liberation," thought he.

"Willis thought I was crazy," continued happy little Phil; "but as soon as Pablo heard about the purse, he agreed for me to come with him. Oh, I have not told you about Pablo, have I? I met him on the road and we went to Zorilla's camp together. He must know a friend of the captain's. I saw him give him two letters. Pablo said he wasn't ready to start back with us last night," the boy added.

"I conjectured as much," mused Arthur, bitterly.

The brothers left El Monte at an early hour next morning and reached the Destierros at midday. When within a mile of

their home, riding on the San José highway, they encountered two mounted representatives of the guardia civil, odd-looking little fellows dressed in a uniform of striped blue linen trimmed with scarlet, and carrying arms. As they drew near, they looked narrowly at the two brothers, and spoke rapidly to each other.

"If I mistake not, it is the Señor Arturo Glynn?" said one of them majestically, as all drew rein.

"It is."

"But it was said that you were carried off by Zorilla and held —"

"It is true, but here I am at liberty, as you see."

"Ah, then the ransom was paid," muttered the second member of the local police.

The first speaker then proceeded to ask many questions, to which Arthur replied in the briefest manner possible. The main object in view was evidently to gain accurate knowledge of the situa-

tion and defences of Zorilla's camp, but the officer was greatly disappointed. Arthur reported that he had been confined two days in a cave, that he had been carried there and brought away in the night, and that he had seen nothing of Zorilla's forces except a few sentinels. As to the situation of the stronghold, he could only say that it was in the mountains at a distance of more than twenty-five miles and less than fifty.

"We may call on you for further information," concluded the inquisitor, evidently suspecting that much had been withheld.

"You already have all that I can give," was the prompt answer. "If Zorilla is to be taken," mused Arthur, as he rode on, "it will never be done by such fellows as these."

A few minutes later, the two brothers galloped up the avenue of palms at the Destierros, and were met on the veranda by the whole of a joyful family. While

the rescued son was held in the arms of his now tearful mother, little Phil turned scornfully to the grinning Willis:—

"Oh, yes! You thought I didn't have any sense, didn't you? I *told* you I was going to find Arthur, and I did it, too! My brains were addled, weren't they!"

The good-natured Willis responded with his loudest guffaw, exclaiming: "Dat boy is a sight in dis world. He sho' is!"

His mother questioned him closely when they were alone, and Arthur kept nothing from her except the fact that he had recognized the handwriting of Carita Ramirez. She, however, had already learned from little Phil that Pablo carried two letters to Zorilla's camp, and she was forthwith convinced that one of them was written by the "fair recluse." It was a simple matter of course.

"You see, Arthur, that she has power over him. She was no doubt the person the Padre appealed to."

"No man could see her without feeling her influence," he answered, stubbornly.

"Ah, yes, every beautiful woman has such a power. But I mean in a more particular way. Perhaps she is really his wife — or — it may not be so innocent. Else why is she not with him? Why this strange seclusion?"

"Be kind enough never to speak to me on this subject again," said Arthur, rising to leave the room, such a horror of indignation, of smothered wrath, and of anguish expressed in his face that his mother was terrified and half rose in her chair, exclaiming: —

"Oh, my son, it was for your good only that I said it."

But he did not look round, and avoided her during all that day.

Time went on, with meanwhile no effort on Arthur's part to communicate with the mysterious lady of Buena Esperanza, who had hedged herself around with barriers such as honor forbade him to seek longer

to overpass. Fits of apathy and earnestly courted indifference were succeeded by periods of maddening love and burning jealousy; but Arthur did not hate Zorilla and wished him no ill. A maddening envy may best describe the worst feeling that sometimes seized him, and which was replaced in calmer moments with the respect and good will that had been awakened in him by the behavior of his supposed rival.

And so when the captain of the partido summoned him and had his statement taken down in writing, he carefully avoided imparting, so far as was possible, any information likely to aid in dislodging the patriot-bandit from his retreat. Without approving of Zorilla's continued resistance or methods, Arthur felt more respect for him than for the corrupt and venal government officials whose ceaseless fines and fees and unjust exactions, joined to the outrageous system of devouring taxes, were squeezing the life out of a helpless

people. It may be added, par parenthèse, that the Destierros escaped from much of this, owing to the fact that Roger Glynn, inconsistent though it was, had never relinquished the rights of an American citizen, and on more than one occasion had appealed for protection to the consul representing the country from which he had expatriated himself.

It may also be added that the result of the formal inquiry made by el capitan did not transpire so far as anybody knew, although such information as was obtained he no doubt forwarded to headquarters. At any rate, no troops were sent against Zorilla for a long time to come, and when his mountain retreat was finally invaded, the bird had flown. Subsequent attempts were equally fruitless, and the determined chief managed to continue his game of hide-and-seek from year to year until he was enabled to merge his handful of followers into the forces of the Cuban commander, Maximo Gomez, who raised the

standard of revolt in the year 1895 — with a result as yet in doubt.

Arthur Glynn would not allow himself to hate Zorilla, but gave a certain vent to his feelings by opening a fresh quarrel with Sebastiano Rios. Careful inquiry through acquaintances in San José relative to the false reports leading to Arthur's abduction, resulted at last in their being traced to this young man of fertile imagination. And so one day when the two came face to face in the Posada Aguila, Arthur spoke his mind, warning Rios that if he wished to preserve a whole skin he had better be circumspect in future and circulate no more lying reports. Let them come to conflict again, and a mere grip on his slanderer's collar would be far from sufficient to satisfy the vengeance of Don Arturo Glynn; another time the offender, instead of being pitched headlong over the stone floor of an empty church, would bleed from wounds inflicted by a horse-whip *in public!*

Arthur had chosen the time and place no more carefully than he had selected his words. Indeed, the threat was uttered in the presence of several listeners, and Sebastiano Rios went wild with rage and shame. For a moment he glared impotently, his shapely brown face the sickly color of lead. Then, as his enemy turned scornfully away, he suddenly drew a knife, leaped toward him unawares, and struck the blade deep into his side.

Arthur turned half round, his face becoming deadly white, his right hand moving toward the wound. He tried to leap toward his retreating assailant, but fell groaning on a table and thence to the floor. Everybody in the room rushed to the spot. The assassin was seized and taken to jail, and the wounded man, at his urgent request, was carried promptly to his home.

The wound was of a very serious nature. For more than a month Arthur's robust system fought desperately and doubtfully

for life, but was finally victorious. While the issue was still in doubt, it became known that Rios, who was out of prison on bail, had fled the district. Fearing the risks of a possible trial for murder, he had left his bondsmen in the lurch, with the consent, it was intimated, of his father, who promptly settled all claims.

During the most doubtful period of Arthur's struggle for life, when his body was racked with inflammatory fever and his mind distorted with delirium, he called on the one name, Carita, so incessantly that his physician urgently recommended the bringing of this person to his bedside. Mrs. Glynn at first rebelled, then hesitated, and finally, as the symptoms became more alarming, yielded.

And so Carita was approached through Padre Serrano, and one morning she appeared at the Destierros in the company of the Señora Duran. A servant met and conducted them to the salon. There the doctor waited upon them and shortly after-

ward led Carita to Arthur's bedside. The ladies of the house had not appeared to welcome the visitors, and no one but a woman servant was now found in the wounded man's room. Though preoccupied with a great pain, Carita Ramirez did not fail to note all this and comprehend its cause.

But she did not hesitate. She sat down at Arthur's bedside and gazed at his bloodless face with visible emotion. Her own face was pale and worn, but her manner bespoke a certain chastened serenity. His eyes rested upon her without a sign of recognition, but after he had called faintly, "Carita! Carita!" and she had put her cool hand in his burning palm and held it there, a peaceful, healing calm seemed gradually to steal over his fevered body and flow in like cooling water upon his heated, striving brain. In a few minutes he lay quite still and erelong he fell asleep.

"There is more hope for him now,"

whispered the doctor, who had observed all these signs.

Carita rose. "I will go now," she said, and, after one more lingering glance at the face on the pillow, she went out.

The moment she had gone Mrs. Glynn entered from an inner room, looked at her sleeping son, and comprehended that an influence more powerful than her own had blessed him with its healing touch. Then she stole out hurriedly on the visitor's track, a mother's jealousy burning in her heart. She overtook Carita before the latter had joined the Señora in the salon.

"It was discourteous not to have met you," she said, without preliminary, "but I am a mother and you have bewitched my son. I must be frank: I thought no good of you and I objected to your coming. But now that I see what you have done for him, I must thank you."

The two women stood still and looked intently at each other, the elder making

no effort to conceal her jealous dislike, the younger with the serenity of a noble nature that is falsely accused.

"You *are* beautiful," murmured the mother, "and your face seems kind. Have pity on him, and on me."

"Some day you will repent," said Carita Ramirez, without haughtiness or anger or visible resentment, but with a slow distinctness that fell upon her accuser with the force of a blow.

Having said this, she turned quickly away, walked on, joined the waiting Señora, and the two went out hurriedly together.

Miss Mabel Ray watched them narrowly from an upper window, as they were assisted into their volante and drove away. Then she went and surveyed her own face critically in the mirror.

"Yes, she is prettier than I, far prettier," was the mental observation of this candid person. "I don't wonder at the men."

## XIV

### Death at Buena Esperanza

THE arrival of the cane-grinding season found Arthur sufficiently restored to give directions, but several weeks passed before he was allowed to take up the work with the energy and absorbed attention it required. Barring the delicate women, an almost ceaseless activity was the rule for everybody at the Destierros from December to April. Every duty, from the planting of the cane to the shipping of the sugar, was in progress at one time. Day after day a small army of laborers toiled on, ploughing, hoeing, cutting cane, loading wagons, driving teams, grinding, spreading the crushed stalks out to dry for fuel, boiling, skimming, and crystallizing the juice, filling

hogsheads and driving to the shipping point with load after load of sugar and molasses. The furnace fires burned and the cylinders of the mill revolved night and day, and not even the young master, when once he was well and strong again, indulged himself in more than six hours of repose out of the twenty-four.

As the grinding season drew toward its close and the crop was practically disposed of, Arthur had leisure to look into their accounts and discuss their finances with his mother. The investigation was not encouraging. They owned their plant, but had little working capital, and felt unable to purchase certain improved and labor-saving machinery now required in order to keep pace with wealthier planters. Aside from this, the markets of the world were being glutted through the over-production of beet sugar in Europe and prices were fast becoming ruinous. It was doubtful, indeed, if the crop just harvested would leave a living margin above

expenses. Many and serious, therefore, were the consultations between mother and son.

"We are playing a losing game, and may as well look the fact squarely in the face," said Arthur one day in the spring. "We had better sell out if we can."

"And return to America?"

"Yes."

"No more sugar-making in the States for me. Plantation life there is dead — from all I hear."

"But uncle proposed to take me into business with him, you remember."

"Ah, if we could live comfortably in New York, that would be another thing." The widow sighed and continued: "I was once well content to remain in Cuba, but since Roger's death and all that happened to you last fall, I have been willing enough to go. It would be a relief," she added with a faint smile, "to have no longer to pay a tax of a hundred per cent on every barrel of American flour we eat."

She did not add that it would be a much greater relief to see her son no longer moody and unhappy. To leave Cuba, she thought, would be the surest means of dissipating the cloud that now dimmed the brightness of his youth. He was ignorant that Carita Ramirez had visited him during his delirium, and since his recovery he had made no effort to see her, but his mother well knew that, although he may have ceased to hope, he was far from forgetting. The cloud was not lifted.

"If we go, we leave Mabel behind," Mrs. Glynn went on to say.

"Ah?"

"She told me this morning that she had at last accepted Don Alfredo."

"When they have marree, I hope she will teach him the Engleesh."

"Don't laugh at him," said Mrs. Glynn reprovingly, though she smiled. "He makes a brave effort to speak her language. He seems to me a good man,

and he is quite a gentleman in the Cuban sense. But of course I regret the match."

"I meant no harm," said Arthur, lightly. "I like him, and if she is satisfied, I am. Willis is the only one likely to regret it seriously. He will consider it a 'come down' for anybody from Maryland."

"She *is* satisfied," pursued Mrs. Glynn. "She likes him—loves him, in her way—and it will suit her. She has become habituated to Cuban life. Don Alfredo is rich and his wife will live in semi-mediæval splendor, so far as concerns an army of servants, and all that. The possibility of intellectual expansion will be wanting, but Mabel will be contented. She would regard a marriage with a young American of moderate fortune hopelessly tame in comparison."

"When is it to be?"

"That is as yet unsettled. We are all invited to dine there to-morrow in celebration of the event."

And they all went accordingly. The

Limoneros (lemon trees), where Don Alfredo lived with his mother and sisters, was one of the largest estates of the neighborhood. Beside the vast acreage devoted to the culture of sugar-cane, it boasted an extensive tobacco farm and a cafetal. The latter involved a fruit farm also, for the coffee is a delicate plant, requiring shade as well as sunshine. The hundred acres at the Limoneros called the cafetal, therefore, was one vast garden of a beauty and variety such as can be seen only in the tropics. The ground was planted in regular squares of about one acre, and these were intersected by broad pathways lined with palms, mangoes, and a great variety of fruit trees. The flowering pomegranate, multitudes of roses, the yellow jasmine, the scarlet penon, and many wild flowers contributed brilliant color to the scene as well as fragrance to the atmosphere. Adding in no small degree to all this beauty, were the coffee plants themselves, their milk-white blos-

soms mingling so thickly with the light green of the leaves as to suggest a cloud of fallen snow.

The big, rambling, old residencia of yellow, porous stone slumbered among towering ceibas and palms in a pleasing atmosphere of repose, with the usual palm-bordered avenue leading thereto from the public highway. Up this avenue now rode fair ladies in flowing robes of every bright color, and stately caballeros in spotless linen, Panama hats, and gleaming silver spurs; for the friends from the Destierros were not the only invited guests.

The diners numbered some thirty, in fact, and to these a bountiful meal was served on the open veranda in the late afternoon. The Señora Rodriguez, a lady whose age and wrinkles and brown skin were not disguised by a liberal application of cascarilla, sat at the head of the table, Mrs. Glynn on her right, Arthur and the Señorita Isabel on her left. Don Alfredo and Miss Ray sat farther down among the

other guests, and were as gay as the gayest. The conversation was altogether in the Spanish tongue, except when, after warming over the wine, Don Alfredo treated his English-speaking friends to one or two excruciating quotations from Shake-a-spear and Tenneesown. The hostess spoke gravely, and in soft, gurgling accents, with the Señora "Gleen" about the coming marriage, household affairs, et cetera. The Doña Isabel prattled joyously about nothing in particular, and Arthur listened and answered absently, while trying to do his duty. The various other guests laughed and jested with a great flow of spirits and no little native wit. Exclamations, shrugs, ripples of laughter, were as continuous as the sounds of knives and forks.

Although quite half a score of negro servants waited on the guests, the whole dinner had been placed on the board before the company was seated, the conglomeration of odors, in which the preponder-

ance distinctly belonged to garlic, being scarcely agreeable. Quantity was preferred to select quality. The dishes were without number: a whole roast pig decorated with ribbons, fowls garnished with olives and prunes, omelets streaked with raw blood, sausages served with garlic, heaping piles of rice colored red by a vegetable juice, other meats served in a sauce of wine and sugar, bananas fried like potatoes, and stewed in wine and syrup like preserves, *chili colorado*, and other salads swimming in olive oil, many kinds of bread, a dozen different vegetables, more than a dozen different fruits, almost as many desserts, aguardiente and a great variety of Spanish wines, besides cigars and cigarettes in amazing quantities.

While still they lingered over the table, the crimson sunset faded, the purple skies darkened, and daylight was followed by starlight with a suddenness almost suggestive of magic; but at once the little wicker cages hanging in festoons overhead dif-

fused the soft light emitted by the imprisoned cocuyos, and the scene was more attractive than before. Adjournment to the great drawing-room which had been prepared for dancing was soon proposed, and the gayety of the table was continued in a higher key.

Miss Mabel Ray, with her fair face, flaxen hair, and silken gown of a delicate shade of blue, was indeed the vision of a daughter of another clime against the background of that rural Cuban ball-room where olive-faced, raven-haired señoritas swam back and forth (walk is not the word to describe their graceful locomotion) in the most gorgeous apparel. A French modiste would have been driven to desperation at sight of the combinations of the deepest shades of red, yellow, blue, green, all and more than all the colors of the rainbow. And yet, such was the inborn charm of the plainest of these ladies, so indescribably graceful were the movements of their lithe and supple

limbs, so mellifluous their voices, so beautiful and expressive their midnight eyes, and such was their spontaneous vivacity of manner, that the whole effect was of a poem in color and motion, a poem of startling semi-barbaric rhythm it is true, but without a discord.

Passionately fond of the sport, the gayly clad señoritas, whose small shapely feet seemed made especially for dancing, never wearied as they were whirled around and round or swam back and forth to the strains of light and sparkling Cuban airs. More striking, if possible, than the costumes of this occasion were the glittering jewelled fans, which, in their bewitching eloquence of movement, seemed to almost possess a language of their own, — now gracefully waving in the satisfaction of flattered vanity, now abruptly closing in real irritation or mere pretence of pouting, now slowly unfolding in forgiveness, now raised to screen a blushing, radiant face peeping forth archly like the smiling sun

behind a gorgeous cloud. All this, and more, was expressed by the Doña Isabel's beautiful fan, as she danced or walked with Arthur Glynn, who was absent and silent, repentant and devoted, by turns.

Throughout the evening there was smoking, some caballeros dancing with cigars in their mouths, and the wall-flowers, elderly señoras, were constantly refreshing themselves with cigarettes or coffee as they looked on and gossiped.

After very many dances, at midnight the entertainment was varied by the introduction of a large paper globe, which was suspended from the ceiling within some six or seven feet of the floor. Blindfolded volunteers of both sexes with walking-canes in their hands then approached and endeavored to hit it, the spectators watching with the greatest interest. Many failed completely, their futile efforts exciting loud merriment; others just grazed the globe, and the contest went on until a lucky blow brought down the prize amid

applause, a general good-humored scramble for the contents, bonbons, trinkets, and toys, then following.

And so this "revelry by night" of "fair women and brave men" went on to a very late hour, until even the most enthusiastic of the fair dancers began to demand of their partners, "Que hora es?" to which question happy Don Alfredo, overhearing, would reply: "The hour for merriment, Señorita; not the hour for departing."

Nobody expected to see Miss Mabel Ray before high noon, but it was barely nine o'clock when Arthur Glynn stood with his mother on the veranda at the Destierros next morning. A negro came up the avenue and spoke to them.

"There is death at Buena Esperanza," he reported.

"Who is it?" asked Mrs. Glynn, quickly.

The negro did not know. A passing

laborer had just told him that death had visited the neighboring estate, but the name of the victim was not known.

"Bring my horse," ordered Arthur unsteadily, his face very pale.

"No — the volante," ordered Mrs. Glynn. "Let me go with you, Arthur," she begged, her voice almost as unsteady as his had been. "We are among their near neighbors. I ought to go — don't you think?"

He did not answer. He sat down on the steps and waited, his face buried in his hands. A few minutes later they were driving in silence and rapidly toward Buena Esperanza.

Padre Serrano opened the door in answer to their summons. His face was solemn but calm.

"*Consummatum est*," he said, softly. "The game is played out — the race is run. God hath healed that for which man knows no healing."

"Is it —" gasped Arthur Glynn in the agony of his suspense.

"No," answered the priest, putting his hand affectionately on the young man's arm; "it is one who hath drunk deeper of the waters of tribulation than she, though hers hath been a bitter cup. It is her father. Come, I will show you."

He led them into the silent house, up the stairs, out upon the veranda above the patio, and pointed to an open coffin in the centre of the court, wherein lay the last of Don Ignacio Ramirez, a leper white as snow.

## XV

### The Bright Spot

THE court and galleries around it were filled with an aromatic odor like incense, as purple wreaths of smoke rose up from four different vessels resting on the ground at the four corners of the leper's bier. The open coffin rested on an improvised stand covered with a blue cloth. A naked, glistening Toledo blade lay beside it and the flag of the Cuban insurrectionists covered the exposed body from the breast downward. Except for a ghastly whiteness and slight protuberances, the face was not disfigured.

The solemn voice of Padre Serrano broke softly upon the stillness: —

" When a man shall have in the skin of his flesh a rising or bright spot, and the

hair thereof be turned white, and it covereth him from his head even to his foot, he is a leper, and the priest shall pronounce him unclean, and he shall dwell alone."

As the visitors looked and listened, dumb with amazement, suddenly Pablo and an associate, browner, smaller, and more weazened than even himself, appeared from the gallery below. Carrying a coffin lid uplifted before them, so that they could not look upon the dead, they approached the bier, fitted the cover on the coffin, screwed it down, and retired in silence, and speedily, though without indecent haste.

"Let us go, too," said Padre Serrano, and conducting the visitors to the salon on the first floor, he invited them to be seated.

"This, then, is the explanation of—of—" faltered Mrs. Glynn, an uneasy look on her face.

"This is the mystery of Buena Esperanza."

"And she — how long —" muttered Arthur Glynn, groping for his words. "Tell me all."

"It has lasted nine years," said the priest, seating himself before the mother and son. "There is no longer cause for secrecy and you shall hear all. The saddest histories may be told in the fewest words," he added, and proceeded to tell the story of which the following is a brief outline: —

In the year 1868, when the last Cuban insurrection began, Don Ignacio Ramirez was the owner of vast estates and one of the wealthiest planters in the eastern district of "the ever-faithful isle." His sympathies were with the revolutionists, and he not only raised the standard of revolt on his estates and contributed large sums to the cause, but served in the field until his health declined. In 1876, when the rebellion was finally crushed, or at least formally suppressed, he was thrown into a dungeon at San Miguel to await his trial.

Fortunately he had investments in the United States, and now, although his Cuban property had been confiscated, he was not left destitute. By employing large sums as bribes, after three months of imprisonment he was enabled to escape from his dungeon and land in Jamaica, accompanied by his daughter and only remaining child. (His wife had died during the rebellion, and his two sons were slain in battle.)

It was while living in Jamaica, in a state of dejection and ill health, pining for his native land, that the disease that was in his blood began to show itself. Its ravages were slow. Indeed, for three years or more he believed himself afflicted with a mere skin disease that would yield to proper treatment and sanitary precautions. But the day came when he knew himself to be hopelessly a leper, and he began to consider the question of isolating himself in a lazaretto. This step, however, was never taken. For his daughter Carita,

then a girl of sixteen, made a solemn vow before the altar that she would not be separated from him until the day of his death. The two lived three years longer in Jamaica, in a secluded retreat, and then took the risk of returning to Cuba, where the stricken man wished to end his miserable days. An agent had secured for them the remote estate of Buena Esperanza, and there they lived until the end, in the midst of seclusion and mystery.

Their only companion was the Señora Duran, an impoverished relation, and they were served only by the faithful Pablo and his wife. The Señora was of one mind with Don Ignacio that, according to custom and law, he should bury himself within the boundaries of a lazaretto in the interests of his beloved child as well as others who might nearly approach him. But Carita, gentle and yielding in all things, was in this inflexible, and her father was further restrained from seeking the publicity of an application by the price upon

his head. The Señora Duran, though disapproving and even in some fear of her own safety, would not abandon the devoted girl and continued to live at Buena Esperanza, in a remote quarter of the house, never seeing Don Ignacio face to face. Nor did Pablo or the woman servant ever voluntarily see or go near him, and Carita alone ministered unto him.

"For a year past," concluded Padre Serrano, "no human being has looked upon his face, not even Carita. He would not suffer it. But she often spoke with him across the court of an evening, and always placed his food and drink before his door. He carried a bell when he moved about so that every one might avoid him; and, by the aid of a regulated system of signals, he communicated all his desires, was waited upon and suffered no want, until at last God took from him his bitter cup."

"And Zorilla?"

"They were old companions in arms, and the rebel came here a number of times

by night. Don Ignacio at first contributed money to aid in keeping the 'spark' alive — in the phraseology of Zorilla, — but ceased when he learned of the lawless acts committed in the name of freedom."

"And the Señorita Ramirez, — what was he to *her?*" Mrs. Glynn wished to know yet one thing more of Zorilla, and her manner was eager as she looked away from the blanched and horror-stricken face of her son, who had completely forgotten the patriot-bandit in a more intense anxiety.

"Nothing," the Padre answered, with a certain haughtiness and a momentary irritation. "He loved her — who does not? — but she would not listen to him. She suffered him to come to the house, fearing his anger for her father's sake, and because it was a useful diversion for the poor, isolated leper to talk with his old friend across the court at night. But she gave him no hope and he rarely saw her, indeed. Besides, she long ago resolved never to

marry, and her father, the Señora, and I have all approved of her vow. You need not wonder wherefore."

"And I — I who thought myself charitable," exclaimed Mrs. Glynn, brokenly, cut to the heart with remorse, "have attributed evil to this misguided but pure-hearted and devoted child! How can she forgive me?"

"Ask, rather, that God will forgive you."

"Will you not let me see her? Let me offer her my sympathy; let me do something to — to help her, poor girl!"

"Sit down, Señora. Not to-day. It is best to leave her with the Señora Duran as yet. Later she may be willing to see you."

"She said that some day I would repent," muttered Mrs. Glynn, absently, her look indicative of keen pain and something of awe. "God forgive me and show me how to make amends."

Arthur Glynn sat dumb, mutely ask-

ing why could not a man die when life became as now, a horror unspeakable. Where was now the daily hope that had never died, in spite of all there was to kill it? — the blessed hope that he would one day adventure into the unknown and beautiful realm of her inner life, that far, enchanting El Dorado that swam ever before his longing vision. The vacancy he now looked upon unmanned him. He began to shake like one in mortal terror. He could not lose her; it was not mere happiness, it was life itself.

He half started up and subsided into his seat; he looked about him stupefied, his eyes becoming dull and listless. There had fallen upon him a great and blank despair. Anon he looked vacantly through the open window, and, as his glance alighted on the quivering foliage of a tree, his thoughts fell oddly upon his boyhood and a tree like that which he had loved to climb. Why could not one remain always a happy boy, never to advance

within reach of that suffocating anguish which hovered threatening on black wings above the milestones of manhood? A great sob arose in his throat; he sank suddenly down and bowed his head on his mother's knee, as if, indeed, he were a boy once more; but unlike those of a callow boy, the noiseless sobs that now shook his frame were the strivings of a spirit sorely tried with the sternest grief that humanity knows.

"Padre, are you sure it is in the blood?" the mother whispered, gently pressing her hands on her son's bowed head.

"I know only what I have been told," was the low answer. "It was what Don Ignacio always said, and the chief reason why he consented to keep his daughter near him. He expected the disease inevitably to show itself in her in any case, and therefore yielded to circumstances and persuasion, allowing her to take the risk of contagion. And she — she has long regarded it as certain, though there

is as yet no sign. Is it any wonder, then, that her thoughts are turned toward heaven, and she shrinks with horror from the thought of distilling the poison in the veins of an unborn generation? Her vow is given that her father's leprous race shall cease from off the earth. And who will dare say that she hath not done well?"

Little Phil and the negro Willis stood at the foot of the Destierros avenue of palms and watched the funeral cortège as it passed on its way to the campo santo.

First, a gilded hearse with curtains of pale blue silk, drawn by four black horses, and driven by a coachman in a cocked hat covered with gold braid, and a scarlet coat alive with brass buttons and gilt ornaments. On each side of this gay funeral car walked six hired mourners dressed in black, with cocked hats and swallow-tail coats. Six volantes followed, the first

containing two priests, the others sympathizing neighbors, all of the male sex. The scarlet-clothed hearse-driver, the twelve hired mourners in black dress coats, the occupants of the volantes, one and all, with the sole exception of the grave and thoughtful Padre Serrano, were smoking cigars with a grim earnestness that would soon call for a fresh supply.

So passed Don Ignacio Ramirez, the leper, from the sight of men.

## XVI

### "Wait for Me"

IT was the seventh day thereafter,—early morning at Buena Esperanza, the sweet cool morning of spring. The blessed rain falls, the loving sun shines, impartial nature blooms, for all, the evil as for the good, the afflicted as for the happy. Although at Buena Esperanza unmolested wild creatures from the neighboring hills moved fearlessly through the tangled sugar-cane that grew on perennially, though cultivated and harvested now no more, and crept up through the giant weeds to within a stone's throw of the residencia which slumbered on, sunk in dreams of past prosperity and unheeding the foot-fall of its approaching ruin, the smile of nature's bloom was still there to soften the stern outlines of a

melancholy scene. Even in blackened lava fields there are green knolls that escape the destroyer's consuming breath.

Around the latticed bower there was not merely this undying smile that is given gratis without even the asking, but the beauty of a well-ordered garden. The devastating weeds had not yet dared to invade the paths or choke the blossoming plants. The flamboyant and the jasmine, the oleander and the rose, the delicate white and red *vinca*, still blossomed unchecked. And the gentler birds sang joyously in the neighboring trees, lingering there as if attracted to the spot.

White as a lily, thinner than of yore, but not more sad and not less beautiful, was Carita Ramirez, as she sat meditating in her bower, her lustrous, star-like eyes expressive of the chastened solemnity and resignation of the tried and conquering saint. Suddenly she started to her feet, her white face flaming. Her chin sank into the white lace on her bosom, and her

burning cheek became a rose in a bank of lilies.

Arthur Glynn stood before her, a suggestion of physical weakness in his pale worn face, but the strength of firm resolve in his eyes.

"You love me, Carita, even as I love you," he said, gently. "Is it not so?"

She lifted her head and looked at him full, unflinching.

"After the third time I saw you," she said, "I threw a piece of love vine in the court and called your name. It lived — it grew — and I prayed to be forgiven for my joy, but every moment I exulted."

Their eyes were joined and burned together. His arms went out to take her, but she, retreating, raised her hand between them.

"You forget," was her low anguished cry.

"No, I do not forget," he answered

solemnly, standing in his place. "I am not come to bid you break your vow — not in reality. I am here to beg that you break it only in the letter, while keeping it in the spirit. Be my wife in name only. Marry me, Carita, that I may have the right to love you and be with you and care for you — when — "

She interrupted him with a strange, low laugh, and there burned in her eyes a fiery, inextinguishable joy. It was the exultation of the martyr at the stake who sees the promised paradise through an intervening curtain mercifully withdrawn. She came up to him, grasped his hand, and bowed her face upon it, with low, inarticulate murmurings as of heavenly music. And then, when with a lover's imperiousness he had taken her forcibly into his arms, she lifted her lips and kissed him on the mouth. For a little space they forgot altogether the evil thing, and felt that they two had become one, while the trees and the latticed bower swam

round them giddily in a roseate perfumed atmosphere.

The first to awaken, — with an abrupt movement, an amazing strength, she broke from him and bounded away with the speed of a frightened deer. Then, as suddenly, she halted, turned round, and seeing him coming and calling with wild entreaty, she gathered all her forces and commanded him to halt as a queen might command, —

"Touch me no more," she said invincibly.

Then, as he fell back panting, she stepped again within the shade of the bower, waving him back from her.

"This is the end," she said in a great calm that made him wonder, he who trembled from head to foot and thrilled in every vein. "After to-day," she continued, "we shall see each other no more."

"Oh, no, no, no!"

"Yes — yes. I cannot take the gift you offer me. Arturo, my Arturo," she said

tenderly, "you must be free. You must go, leaving me to the will of Heaven. Do not fear for me. I shall always be happy — happy in the thought that you are mine, mine. I shall die loving you, kissing you, and when this corrupted mortal tenement that I shall suffer in has set me free, I shall await your coming in the world where eternal love will gift us with eternal joy."

They stood silent for a space, their eyes exchanging messages of the soul's affection, till he, returning to the earth, subsiding from the height to which her words had momentarily uplifted him, tasted anew of the bitter, deathly cup of anguish.

"What will you do?" he asked mechanically.

"All is prepared. In three days I enter a convent which the remnant of my father's fortune will endow."

"You will let me know the place?" he asked in a kind of stupefaction, his face unmoved.

"No — no, Arturo."

"Then I shall die."

"No, you will live. We shall live, you and I, till it please Heaven to join us in the life of death. We shall live to learn that earthly happiness is after all but a moment's joy in the life of eternity, that here below it is the highest, the best, the immortal part of us, that bids us suffer in order to be true."

He had not yet gone, but was struggling hard to go at her firm and gentle bidding, when Padre Serrano came hurriedly along the path and surprised them. They saw with wonder that his wonted calm had deserted him. His manner showed great agitation. Tears were streaming down his face.

"What is it, my father?" Carita Ramirez asked quickly.

Arthur Glynn said nothing, but if he had spoken his thought, it would have been to say: "They are impervious to fresh calamity who are already mad with grief."

"It is not sorrow but the joy of hope

that brings these tears," said the good father, looking upon them with tenderness.

"Hope? — for whom?"

"For Carita Ramirez and Arthur Glynn. It is not certainty, but it is hope."

"Do not play with us," cried the young man, fiercely.

"Let the letter speak for itself," said the Padre, hastily unfolding a paper which they had not observed in his hands. "I found it with Don Ignacio's will. It is of such recent date that it could not have arrived earlier than the day before his death, but as it was opened, I infer that he read it, and am glad. It is dated at Santiago and signed 'Pedro Quintana.'"

With which introduction, the priest began to read aloud a letter addressed to the Señor Don Ignacio Ramirez, which may be translated thus:—

"My loved Friend: — Months ago you wrote me that you were slowly dying

of leprosy. You also informed me that you had one daughter still living, sole remnant of your ruined family, and that for her sake you wished to make an investigation. You reminded me that, although after acquiring a fortune you had married into a noble family, you yourself were ignorant even of the names of your parents, who had abandoned you in your infancy. You gave me the name of the worthy man who brought you up, and the only other clue which you possessed, desiring me to set on foot such an inquiry as might lead to the discovery of your father's and mother's families, with the sole object of ascertaining whether leprosy were to be found in either. You stated that your wife's family was free from such a taint, and you wished to know with reference to your own and (through you) your daughter's, certain knowledge on this point being of the highest importance to her. You added that you had long suspected that one or both of your parents

were lepers, and had little or no hope of finding that your own case was accidental and not hereditary.

" I have thus given the purport of your letter to me, bearing in mind the sad fact, which you relate, that your memory is rapidly failing. In answer, I can only state that the investigation you wished me to make has been fruitless. I have been unable to find any trace of either of your parents. But I have ascertained one fact which I believe to be of greater importance. It is this: the evidence is strong that the dungeon in which you languished three months at San Miguel was at that time infected with leprosy. I have learned that a prisoner came out of it leprous two weeks before you entered it, and that another developed leprosy there a few months after your escape. Both these men are now in the lazaretto of Las Perdidas.

" You tell me that the first signs of your affliction appeared within two months

after your escape from this infected dungeon. As you have no actual proof that the disease is hereditary in your family, should we not conclude from what I have learned that your own case is accidental? In my opinion there are a hundred chances to one that this is so, although there are undoubtedly cases of hereditary leprosy in the island. Of your daughter I should say: should she love and be beloved, and have given herself time after your death to secure herself against the possibility of contagion, and the man of her choice shall have been truthfully informed of everything, and yet be willing and desirous,—then, I should say, let her marry with a clear conscience and a hopeful mind, leaving the future to the God of mercy. Am I not right? Your mind and heart alike will say yes.

"Therefore be at peace in this matter, dear friend, and may God and our lady watch over you and soften your pains until you are mercifully healed at last

beyond the grave. A Dios, Ignacio! Reciba todo el cariño y afecto de su amigo leal,

"PEDRO QUINTANA."

"You see, my children, that I have brought you hope," said Padre Serrano, having ceased to read and looked up smiling, relieved now to have done what his heart moved him to do.

Long had the worthy father debated the question, and it was, indeed, with fear and trembling that he finally decided to approach the lovers with this important letter which offered them no certainty, but only hope. The events of the ensuing years alone were to reveal the wisdom or madness of his course. Well was it for the peace of his declining days that these brought no regrets.

They had listened, panting, to the concluding advice of this kindly friend of the dead, this good Pedro Quintana, hardly daring to look up from the

ground, but now their eyes leaped gladly together, and, with a face on fire with joy, Arthur made the movement prompted by his heart.

But Carita stepped quickly back and lifted her hand between them.

"Not yet," she said, with the radiant look, and the voice, and the smile of an angel, but of an angel who still loved the earth. "Not yet, Arturo mio. Wait for me, my beloved. Give me a year in proof against contagion, and then — then come to me, if you will, and we will leave the rest to God."

THE END

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